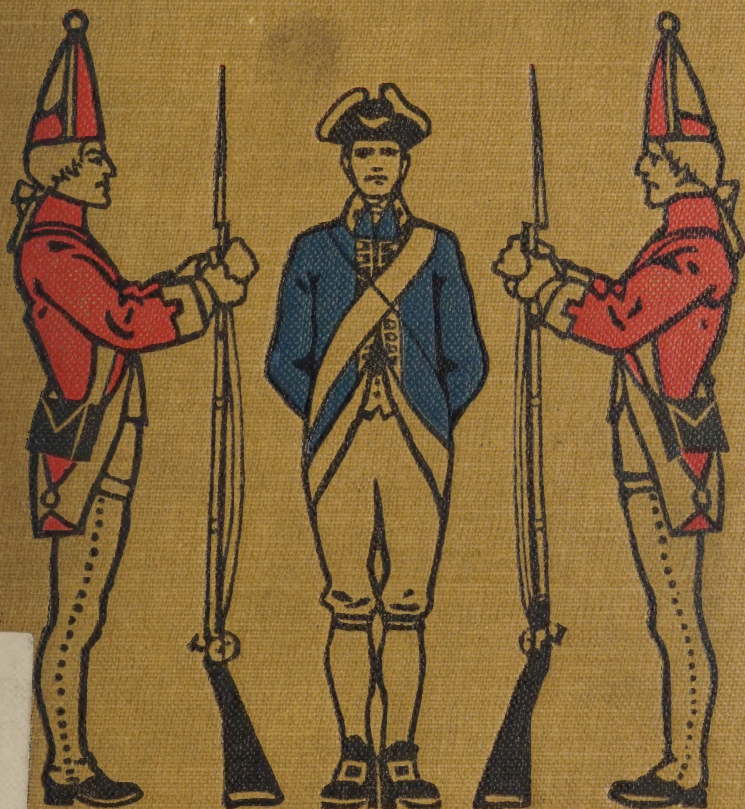


# IN THE HANDS OF THE RED COATS



EVERETT T. TOMLINSON

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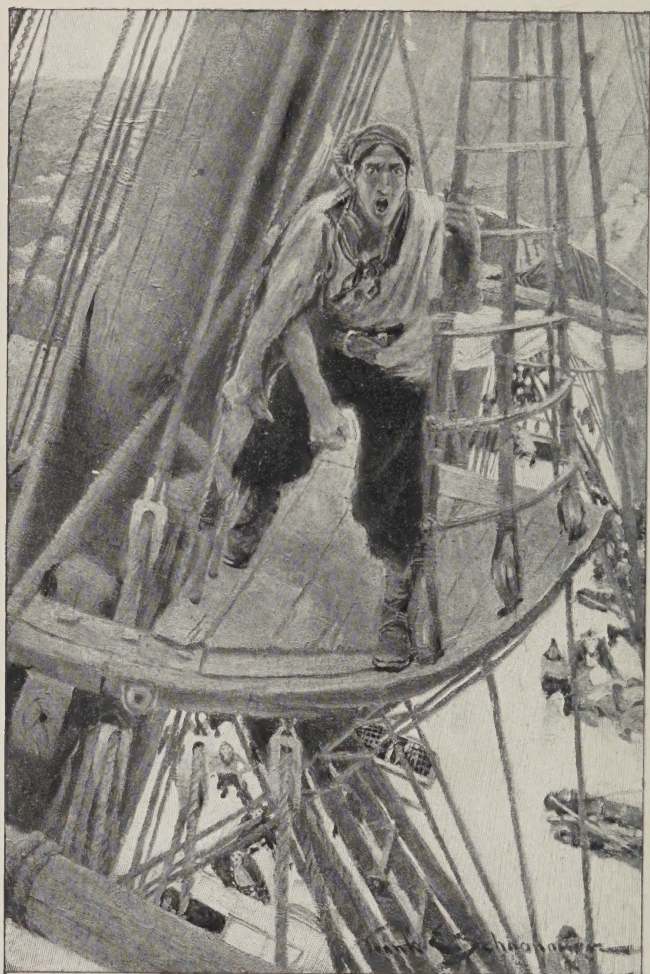
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'TWO SAIL TO LEEWARD!' (PAGE 116)

# IN THE HANDS OF THE REDCOATS

A Tale  
of the Jersey Ship and the Jersey  
Shore in the Days of  
the Revolution

BY

EVERETT T. TOMLINSON

AUTHOR OF "THE BOYS OF OLD MONMOUTH," "A JERSEY BOY IN THE REVOLUTION"  
"THREE COLONIAL BOYS," "WARD HILL AT WESTON," "CAMPING  
ON THE ST. LAWRENCE," ETC.



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## PREFACE

THE incidents which have been incorporated in this story of the American Revolution are almost without an exception true. Some of them have been taken out of their exact setting, and made to conform to the requirements of a tale which is an attempt at least to portray the experiences and sufferings of some of the hardy and humbler patriots of that trying period.

Too often the study of our history has exalted the few at the expense of the many. The leader is remembered, but "the man behind the leader" is frequently forgotten. Without detracting from the one, it would seem but just that increased honor should be given the other. The spirit, life, and heroism of "the people" would also seem to be not out of place in the annals of a democracy.

For many of the details of this story I am indebted to Smith, Yard, Salter, Hatfield,

Barber and Howe, Sabine and others, not to mention the works of recent historians, and the kindness of many friends who have freely given me access to scrap-books and family and local histories.

For the incidents in the life on board the Jersey I have drawn freely from "The Adventures of Ebenezer Fox in the Revolutionary War," a little volume of personal recollections of the privations and sufferings endured in a captivity of many weary months on the detested old prison-ship. I trust the shade of the worthy Ebenezer will forgive me for transferring a few of his deeds to another character. The deeds are no less true though another is given credit for doing them. My aim has been to present a reasonably correct picture of the heroism and suffering of that great body of men who died for their country amidst the horrors of that loathsome hold.

I trust also that this tale may prove to be an incentive to my young readers to work out for themselves a larger knowledge of the history of their own land. Greater than is a



country are the men who made the country, and the men whom the country makes. The life of the people, not only in the far distant days of the Revolution, but also in our own times, is after all the test, as it should be the aim, of all true patriotism. All which enriches that, which enlarges its horizon, and increases its perception of what our fathers struggled for, is certain to be of value. The present is but the fruition of the past, and there can be no understanding of to-day without the knowledge of yesterday.

So I have tried not only to interest my readers in a tale, but also to help them to appreciate the devotion of some of "the people" to their country in its hour of need. Surely such lessons are not without their place to-day.

EVERETT T. TOMLINSON.

ELIZABETH, New Jersey.



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# IN THE HANDS OF THE REDCOATS

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## CHAPTER I

### A WELCOME HOME

“WHY, John, my son, right glad I am to see you ! I had no thought of beholding the face of my first-born this night.”

As he spoke, Mr. Russell quickened his steps and turned toward the low doorway in his house where he had discovered his son. The younger man was holding his own little lad in his arms, and playfully striving to restrain the zeal which the visit of his soldier father had aroused. For John was Sergeant Russell in Captain Walton's troop, and though he was not clad as a Jersey Blue at this time, still his soldierly bearing was apparent. Even if that had been lacking, no one in the Russell household would have been likely to forget the present occupation

of the one who, in those trying days of the Revolution, had left wife and child, and father and mother, and gone forth to add his share in the defense of his country.

It had been lonely enough in the old farmhouse after John had departed. It was true that Mr. Russell, the senior, with the aid of the slaves, had endeavored to do the work which was required, and to guard the inmates of the home from the attacks of the prowling refugees and Tories; but he was now an old man, and none knew better than he that his presence was no real protection.

Still the labor on the farm was not heavy, for no one thought of trying to provide for more than the bare necessities of existence. Anything more than that was certain to be taken, and, besides, Mr. Russell had in former years been looked upon as one of the well-to-do farmers of New Jersey, and why he had not hitherto been molested he himself could not understand.

Well satisfied, however, to quote his favorite saying, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," he had toiled through the long winter during the absence of his son, and on this night in April was just returning from the woods, where the one cow which remained

upon the place was kept, and as he entered the dooryard he beheld the welcome sight of Sergeant John himself.

The young soldier ran from the house to greet Mr. Russell, still bearing upon his shoulders the little lad, who gleefully pulled at his father's hair and called for a swifter pace, and in a moment the two men clasped hands in a manner which showed that each had read the lessons written upon the other's face during their separation. The elder man's form had bowed perceptibly, and the lines in the face were deeper and the weakness of old age was more pronounced than when last his son had seen him. As for the younger man, though he was not more than twenty-five years of age, there had come a seriousness of manner that plainly showed that youth was gone forever, and that the fearful struggle had already taught him the hardship and suffering of a soldier's life.

"Why have you come, John?" inquired the older man gravely, as they turned together toward the house.

"To see you and my mother and Hester, and King John the Third, here," he added lightly, as the lad referred to secured a firmer grasp on his father's hair and called loudly for increased speed.

"Why have you come, John?" repeated the old man soberly.

The sergeant hesitated, glanced quickly about him before he spoke, and then in a low voice said, "I'll tell you, father. The Tories have made another raid on Tinton Falls."

"Lately?"

"This month."

"Is that all?"

"Yes — no — that is, they have just raided Mr. Bowne's place over here at Middletown, and taken him away prisoner."

"But he has just been exchanged!"

"Nay, not so. This raid was after the exchange had been made."

"And you fear" —

"I know not that I fear anything; but to satisfy myself, I got leave to come and see. Father, I trust you have no money about the place."

"You need have slight fear of that," replied Mr. Russell. "What little I had is gone, and Captain Josh Huddy can tell you where."

The young sergeant did not refer to the report, which he had heard was current among the Tories, that his father had concealed some of his reputed wealth about the place; and



affecting an air of cheerfulness he was far from feeling, entered the house and took his seat with the family at the table, upon which the supper had already been placed. His presence and apparent lack of fear soon had their effect upon the others, though naturally the conversation turned largely upon the war and the life of the young soldier in the camp.

"Yes, it's true," replied the sergeant to a question of his father, "we haven't done anything of much account since we took Stony Point, and that's almost a year ago; but we'll hope for better times to come."

"John," interrupted his mother, "do you get enough to eat?"

"Don't I act as if I did? King John the Third and I are doing our best, aren't we?" he added, turning to the little lad by his side.

In response the monarch drummed with his wooden spoon upon the table, and kicked his sturdy legs in a fashion that set the few dishes rattling.

"You know what I mean. Do they feed you in the camp?"

"Feed us? Of course they feed us, though not as you do. We can't expect to find such cooks as you and Hester every day."

“I hope no one knows you are here, John,” interrupted his wife. “Ever since Stephen Edwards was taken in his father’s house, I’ve been fearful for you.”

“Yes, but he was a traitor and a Tory; yes, and a spy, too. He deserved to be hanged. He’d been down here where he had no business to be.”

“True, John. I know you are among friends, but if the refugees should learn you were here, they might try to get you.”

“But how will they learn of my whereabouts, pray tell me, madam?”

“If Moses and the slaves — You knew Moses had run away?”

“Moses? I’d never have thought it of him. I tell you, father,” he added abruptly, “Old Monmouth has more to fear from the blacks than it has from the pine robbers and Tories put together.”

“Why, my son, what do you mean?”

“I mean what I say. They are promised their liberty if they will join the Tories, though of course you and I know they never will get it. But it does just as well, since they think they’ll have it. They’re the ones that know who has any money or plate or cattle. They know just where every man

lives, and they know lots of paths that lead to the houses that others don't know about. They're pilots and guides and I don't know what all. And now you say Moses has gone?"

"Yes," replied his father quietly, aware of the effect of the question upon the women, and the natural inference also not being lost upon himself.

"Oh, well, Moses has been with you ever since he was born. It is n't likely he'll do you any harm. But still it's true as I said: the Redcoats promise the slaves their liberty if they will join them, and naturally they run away. We don't promise them anything, and then are surprised if they don't seem very loyal. I don't know that I blame them."

"What would you do, son?"

"I'd set every one of them free, if I had my way," replied the sergeant warmly.

"Why, my son! my son! That would never do. We could n't afford to do that."

"Massachusetts and Rhode Island have done it, and one has paid the owner a thousand dollars for each man freed and the other seven hundred and fifty. If they can do it, we can, it seems to me."

"But neither of those colonies has suffered

as New Jersey has. We never could raise the money. There must be at least two thousand black men in our colony. Now Moses was worth to me at least as much as Rhode Island paid for each man, which you say was seven hundred and fifty dollars. Now at that rate, the two thousand slaves would be worth a million and a half dollars."

"But you have n't got Moses now."

"I had him. He has run away."

"Just what they'll all do. You might as well set them free and let them help us in the fight and make a show of doing something, as to refuse and have them run away and join the other side. I feel very strongly about this. It's a big mistake. I" —

The sergeant suddenly paused and started from his seat as the sound of a wild song came through the open window. His alarm was evidently shared by all the family, and for a moment no one moved from his seat. The words of the song were clear and distinct, and the voice of the singer was not unmusical, though it was pitched in a high key.

"There never was night more foul and black — there never was fiercer blast —

Oh, many a prank the winds will play, ere this terrible night be past !

Be merry ; the fiends are roving now — and death is abroad  
on the wind.

Join hands in the daunce, to-morrow's light full many a  
corse shall find.

Our sisters are out on mischief bent — the cows their milk  
shall fail,

The old maid's cat shall be rode to death, and her lap dog  
lose his taile.

The farmer in vain shall seek his horse — *who fastened his  
stable door*

*With key and with bolt* — if he has not nailed a horse-shoe  
firmly o'er."

For a moment the voice ceased, but before  
any one spoke the song was resumed : —

" Merrily daunce we, merrily daunce we, around the sycamore-tree !

Full many will daunce this terrible night, but none will be  
merry but we.

The ships shall daunce on the yeasty waves, the billows  
shall daunce and roll,

And many a screech of despair shall rise from many a sin-  
sick soule !

Be merry, be merry ! the lightning's flash itself were suffi-  
cient light,

And we 've got a phosphor-gleaming corse to be our candle  
to-night."

As the singer ceased, a wild laugh followed  
the song, and for a moment Sergeant John  
could not understand the expression of relief  
which appeared upon the face of his mother.

" 'T is Crazy Garrett," she said quickly.

" What a song to sing at John's home-com-  
ing !" murmured Hester.



“I had almost forgotten poor demented Garrett,” said John, evidently relieved by the solution of the mystery, and resuming his seat as he spoke.

“You may well say ‘poor Garrett,’” said his mother. “Since the Revolution began he has not had any place to stay in, and if he looks as he did the last time he was here, he must be a sorry looking object. Call him in, father, and let us give him such comforts as we have. ’Tis a night when we would share with any one.”

Thus bidden, Mr. Russell stepped to the door, but he started back abruptly as Crazy Garrett himself entered the room, for he evidently had not intended to wait for any such formality as an invitation.

In the dusk the poor creature presented a sight which would have moved the heart of the hardest. His long unkempt hair and tattered clothing, the expressionless eyes, which glanced swiftly from one to another of the little company before him, and the sunken cheeks which indicated the lack of food, all would have appealed to Mistress Russell; but when to them was added the knowledge that the mind had fled from the body of poor Gar-

rett, or rather was imprisoned within it, the compassion of all was stirred.

Crazy Garrett, as he was commonly though not unkindly called, was a well-known character throughout the region. Though fifty years of age, he was the playmate of the children, not one of whom had ever suffered harm at his hands. Indeed, his whole bearing was that of the weakness of childhood rather than the frenzy possible to men in middle life, and on this April night his expression was unusually gentle.

"Garrett," said Mistress Russell kindly, "bring a chair here beside me and have some of our supper with us."

"Supper? Supper? I can eat no supper this night." His voice was low and soft, and almost pathetic, as if he in a measure was aware of his own sad state.

"Oh, yes, Garrett. I think you can. Was that you we heard singing a few minutes ago?"

"Yes, yes; I had to sing," said Garrett eagerly. "The hawks scream, the squirrels chatter, the dogs bark, and Garrett must sing."

Before any one could respond he broke forth into another song:—

“Some shall go down with a bubbling groan on the ocean’s  
pathless way,  
Some shall be dashed on flinty rocks — the vulture and sea-  
birds’ prey,  
Some shall be washed alive on shore to die on the gallows  
tree,  
But gold, or wife, or children deare, none, none shall live  
ever to see.  
Away, away, while the tempest howls, and the thunders  
are heard in wrath,  
Away on your errand of guilt and blood, and destruction  
attend your path.”

For a moment the company sat staring blankly at the singer, and then, before any one spoke, Garrett, smiling and unconcerned, grasped a chair and seated himself beside “King John the Third,” greatly to the delight of that youthful monarch.

## CHAPTER II

### OTHER VISITORS

By the quick glance that Mr. Russell gave his son, John knew that his father suspected, as he did himself, that their strange guest had seen something in the woods which had startled him, but for the sake of his wife and mother the young soldier repressed the question that rose to his lips and quietly observed the visitor.

Meanwhile Mistress Russell had looked well to the wants of Garrett, and for a time they all watched him as he ate as only a half starving man can eat. As soon as the first demands of his appetite had been appeased, Mistress Russell said quietly, "Tell me, Garrett, why you were singing that terrible song."

Another quick glance between John and his father showed that they understood that they were not the only ones to suspect the source of Garrett's song, but neither spoke.

"I have to sing that song, that's why I sing it."

“Have you been up to Gallows Hill of late?”

“I live there. I must stay there day and night for a month of Sundays. You see when Blackbeard put all that gold under that walnut-tree, I was the one who had to stay and guard it. They covered the gold with a broad flat stone, and then Blackbeard said, ‘Who ’ll guard this wealth?’ What could I say but that I would? That’s what you’d have done if you had been there, would n’t you?” he inquired anxiously, peering intently into Mistress Russell’s face as he spoke.

“I’m not blaming you,” she said gently.

“Thank you. ’Twas a dark night when Blackbeard and I placed the gold there, and then some one had to stay and guard it, and of course Blackbeard could n’t, so I offered myself. He took a silver bullet and held it up and said, ‘Horse and hattock in the devil’s name.’ Then he shot the bullet into my poor brain. It did n’t leave any scar, and it did n’t hurt me, but somehow I think I’ve not been alive since. But I have to guard the treasure just the same as if I was here.”

John Russell smiled at his wife as he heard the old story repeated, which had been familiar to him in his boyhood, of how Blackbeard



had landed on the Jersey shore and hidden his piratical gains so securely that no one had since found them. He with the other boys had searched for the hiding-place, as perhaps their grandfathers had searched before them, but without avail. And now poor Garrett Irons had taken up the tale, and imagined himself to be the one left in charge of the buried treasure by the noted pirate himself.

“It was in 1670 when I went with him,” resumed Garrett, “and now it must be later than that.”

“Yes, it’s 1780,” said Mistress Russell.

“That’s a score of years, is n’t it? It must be a score since I went down into the pit.”

“More than that.”

“It’s a long time to wait. A long weary waiting. I have n’t seen my mother. Do you know where she is?”

“Yes. She is doubtless well and happy, where she is.”

“That’s good. I wonder if she remembers me? ’Tis a long and weary waiting. But, do you know, I think the end has almost come?” he added, in a low whisper.

“I’m sure I hope so, with all my heart. What makes you think the end is almost here?”

“Because I saw Blackbeard to-night, and I have n’t seen him since 1670, and that’s a score of years ago, you tell me. He’ll find me all ready. I knew by the look on his face that he had come for the gold, so I’ll have to go back and be there when he comes. I sing to let him know I am ready. It’s the song he sang in 1670, a score of years ago.”

Without another word he rose from the table and abruptly departed from the house. John Russell instantly followed him, but, quick as his movements were, Garrett had already disappeared from sight within the woods and only the words of his song came back:—

“‘I’ll watch it,’ quoth he, ‘for these forty years, I’ve  
wandered o’er land and sea,  
And I’m tired of doing the wicked work, so bury me under  
the tree.’”

Soon perceiving that pursuit was useless, Sergeant John returned to the house and resumed his seat.

“I could n’t find him,” he explained. “I have n’t heard that song since I was a boy.”

“I used to hear it in my own boyhood,” said his father.

“I’m afraid Garrett has seen some one or something about the place,” remarked Mistress Russell quietly, “and has been fright-

ened. It may be that some one really is prowling about."

"Nonsense!" responded her husband, with unnecessary emphasis. "No one except John and Captain Warner and Little Peter Van Mater has been here in weeks. Garrett's visions are all within."

"When were Captain Warner and Little Peter here?" inquired John quickly.

"This afternoon. They had n't been gone more than two hours when you put in an appearance. They might better have stayed here, but go on they would. Captain Warner's brig, the Betsy, is off the shore, and as she's the best privateer Jersey has had in a long time, I can't blame her captain for being in haste to return to her. But with Little Peter it's different."

As John manifested his desire to hear more, his father continued: "Why, it's this way with Little Peter. It's now almost two years since the pine robbers made the attack on his home, and shot his mother and sent his father to New York a prisoner, — or at least that is what they claim they did. Well, Little Peter — we call him 'Little' still to distinguish him from his father, though the little Peter is really the big one — has been living down

here at Benzeor Osburn's. Benzeor himself was suspected of being in the gang that made the raid, but his wife and daughter are folks of another kind, and they've given Little Peter and his brothers and sisters a home, though the lad himself has been in the militia, and has given a good account of himself, too. But all the time he has been eager to find out about his father, and whether he is still a prisoner in the Sugar House in New York, as it was given out he was. The other day he received word from some one — he did n't just seem to know who — that if he would meet the one that sent him the letter down here on the shore, he would hear from the Sugar House. So he started, and fell in with Captain Warner on his way, — the captain had been down to consult with Captain Huddy and a few others, — and they stopped here. I tried my best to get him not to go on; but there was no persuading him, for go he would. He was in good company, though, and as long as he stays by Captain Warner he'll not come to any great harm."

"Perhaps Garrett saw them, and mistook Captain Warner for Blackbeard," suggested Hester.

"That's more than likely, — that is, if he

really saw any one," replied the young soldier. "King John the Third and I will go out and take a look about the premises," he added lightly, for the visit of Captain Warner and his companion seemed to him to have explained the cause of Garrett's uneasiness, if any cause was to be found outside his own disordered mind.

Accordingly the king was lifted to his throne, and, securing a firm grasp on his father's hair, expressed his readiness for the proposed expedition. The soldier started gayly toward the kitchen door, and was just about to pass out, when he suddenly stopped. For a moment he did not speak, and the king vainly ordered an advance of his usually submissive force.

Just emerging from the woods and entering the clearing he counted seven men approaching, and, startled as he was by the sight, his face blanched when he thought he discovered the runaway slave, Moses, dodging into the bushes near the forest. In advance of the party were William Gillian and John Farnham, two of the most bitter Tories of the entire region, and behind them were two white men and three negroes.

Instantly returning to the room and drop-



ping the king from his shoulders, the young sergeant said, "Father, there's a party of seven men coming. Gillian is leading, and they come on no good errand, I fear."

"Mother, do you and Hester take the babe and go upstairs. Bar all the windows, and bar them tight. Do not appear to be in haste, and yet you must not waste a moment," said Mr. Russell quickly.

The frightened women instantly obeyed, and though their faces were colorless, they were too well acquainted with the experiences of some of their neighbors to flinch, now that the time of peril had come to them.

Satisfied that his directions would be obeyed, Mr. Russell and John instantly closed and barred the door and windows in the rear of the house, stopping for an instant only to glance at the approaching band.

"There is Lippencott, I see," said the old man quietly. "His wife is your mother's sister's child. Perhaps he may not be coming with evil intent."

"He is the worst refugee of them all," replied John. "There! As they are now, I can drop four of them with two shots."

As he spoke, John grasped the rifle he had brought with him; but before he could use it,

his father said, "Nay, John, we will wait and learn their errand. It may be that they plan no harm, and ill would it become me to bring their blood upon our heads."

Reluctantly John obeyed his father's word. The door and shutters in the rear of the house were closed and barred, and the younger man then took his stand by the window in the front of the house, while his father, with his rifle within easy reach, was near the door and ready to bar it at a moment's warning.

The approaching men came quietly across the open space, and in the dim light were all recognized by the watchers. The warm air was fragrant with the breath of spring, and the piping tree-toads seemed to proclaim together the needlessness of alarm. But Sergeant John had no thought for anything save those advancing men. He was alarmed, and regretted that he had not followed his first impulse; but it was too late for action now, and he glanced at his father, whose calmness was unruffled.

The band were soon in front of the house, and the old man called to them, "What is your wish, William Gillian? Why have you come to my house this night?"

At the unexpected hail the men halted a

moment, and the leader responded, with a laugh, "That you shall soon know. Our actions shall speak for us."

"Nay, William, you enter not into this house without declaring your purpose in coming! Stand where you now are," he hastily added, as he perceived that the men were about to advance again.

A loud laugh was the only reply. "Come on, boys!" shouted Gillian as he began to run, and together they swiftly approached the door. Instantly the old man seized his gun and fired directly at the leader; but his hand was trembling, though his voice had been calm, and it was evident that his aim had been poor, for the speed of the Tories only increased. As Mr. Russell strove to shut the door, there was a sharp report of a gun outside the house, and the old man fell forward, leaving the door still open.

Without waiting to discover whether his father was still living, Sergeant John fired at the first of the entering band. He saw the man drop to the floor, and then he rushed for the other gun. In a moment, however, the room seemed to be filled with men. There were shots and cries and the reports of the rifles. Before the smoke could roll away, it

was seen that Sergeant John lay stretched upon the floor near the body of his father; and another of those awful tragedies which marked the course of the Revolution in New Jersey, and indeed belong to war itself, had been enacted. The apparently peaceful evening had its own tale of woe, and the attack on the Russells had passed into the annals of Old Monmouth.

## CHAPTER III

### IN THE FOREST

MEANWHILE, not far from the home of the Russells two men were pushing their way rapidly through the forest. One of these was evidently a sailor, and when he spoke, which was seldom, his words were introduced by some nautical term. He was a short, sturdy man in middle life, and his round face was almost bronzed. A pair of small, shrewd eyes seemed never to be at rest, and as he walked he kept glancing uneasily about him, as if he was determined that no unexpected sight of friend or foe should find him unprepared.

By his side walked a young man, taller by a head than his companion. Apparently he was not more than twenty years of age, and yet the serious expression upon his face, and the thoughtful and slow manner in which he spoke, might well have belonged to one who was much older than Peter Van Mater.

"I don't often refer to it now," he was saying, "for somehow I don't like to talk about



it. But since you 've asked me the question I don't mind telling you. It was almost two years ago when it happened. The pine robbers found out that my father was coming home for a day, — he'd been with Washington for a year, you see, and at the time the army had halted over at Hopewell. Well, they came to the house and ordered my mother to give them all the money she had. That was n't very much, as you can well imagine, and as there were six of us children and my father was n't able to do much for us, naturally she did n't like to part with the little she had. They did n't stop to parley much, but the end of it was that she was shot."

The young man stopped for a moment, as if the story had brought back to his mind all the sadness of that scene which could never be forgotten. His companion was also silent, and for several minutes they kept on their way without a word being spoken.

Soon, however, Peter — "Little Peter," he was called by his friends, to distinguish him from his father who bore the same name — resumed his story as if in response to the unspoken request of his friend.

"I don't really believe they intended to do

what they did; but just as they were threatening her with all kinds of torture if she did n't give up the old sock in which her money was kept, they heard some one coming, and when the guard they had stationed outside the door said it was my father, they were probably excited and fired before they knew what they were doing. At least I try to believe that, though my poor mother is gone, whatever they intended to do. Then they seized my father, and that 's the last I have seen of him from that day to this. It was reported that he had been sent to New York, where a reward was paid for every prisoner brought in, but I never heard anything definitely until day before yesterday, when I got this letter I told you about."

"How was the letter signed?"

"Just 'a friend,' that 's all."

"It strikes me it's a squall, and not a fair wind," said Captain Warner abruptly. "You 'll be wrecked or fast aground on a bar afore ye know it."

"I hardly think so," said Peter sturdily. "Anyway, it 's the first real word I 've had about my father, and I must follow it up. Almost anything is better than the suspense I 've had. Sometimes I wake up in the night

when it seems to me I can hear my father calling and calling for me, and I must go to him. The past two years have been terrible ones to me."

"No doubt; no doubt. But they have n't been very cheery ones for anybody, I'm thinkin'. Where d'ye say the babies were?"

"They're all at Sarah Osburn's. She's a good girl, and will take the best of care of them. You would n't call them babies though, if you could see them. They've grown so I don't believe their father would know them if he should meet them to-day."

"He'd know 'em fast enough. Did ye tell me it was this girl's father that was one of the gang that carried your father away?"

"Yes, I said so, and I think so, too," replied Peter bitterly.

"I should n't think ye'd dare to leave 'em there in her charge, then."

"I do feel afraid, and yet what can I do? Sarah knows her father was somehow connected with the attack, and she is trying to do her best to help me out. Of course she does n't ever say that, but it's plain enough to see."

"Where is this man — her father — what did ye say his name was?"

“ Benzeor — Benzeor Osburn. I don’t know where he is. He’s never been back in Old Monmouth since the battle, at least to my knowledge.”

“ Don’t ye think he might somehow be connected with this letter you’ve had about your father? Looks that way to me.”

“ I’ve thought of that,” replied Peter, “ but I can’t think of any reason why he should want to get me into trouble. He’s done enough harm to our family already, and I should think he’d be satisfied with that,” he added bitterly.

Captain Warner made no response, though it was evident that his suspicion was in no wise allayed by his companion’s explanation. For a time they walked on in silence, and the deepening darkness seemed to increase the misgivings of the sailor. The tall chestnuts and oaks, which they passed, tossed their branches and sighed together as if they too shared in the feeling. Across the face of the sky were clouds, that for a moment concealed the moon, — which had now risen, — and gave promise of rain; but they passed rapidly, though their places were soon taken by others.

“ We’ll have rain afore we get to the

shore," said the captain at last, as much to break the oppressive silence as to impart the information to his companion.

"It's the time of year when we need it and are likely to have it, too," responded Peter as he glanced above the tree tops. Almost unconsciously both men increased their speed, though they could still converse when they desired.

"What did Captain Josh Huddy think of your coming down to the shore, as the letter told you to?" inquired the captain.

"He did n't want me to come."

"Exactly. What did ye come for, then? Don't ye think he's a good man?"

"One of the best in Jersey. If it was n't for Captain Huddy down at Tom's River and Captain Adam Hyler up here on the Raritan with his whaleboats, Old Monmouth would n't have much to protect her from the Tories and pine robbers, to say nothing of the red-coats themselves. But I had to come," he added quietly. "I don't know that there's anything very startling I shall find, but I must follow up every clue I get. You see if I really knew that my father was shut up in the Sugar House in New York, or that he really was — was" —

“Yes ; yes ; I know,” interrupted Captain Warner quickly. “Well, I’m hoping it’ll all turn out right and you’ll get what ye came for. I s’pose the redcoats would like to get hold of Josh Huddy himself.”

“Like to ? They’d give a fortune to get him. He’s not only the best officer in the militia hereabouts, but it’s thought he was to blame for the capture and hanging of young Stephen Edwards a year or so ago.”

“Yes, I know about that. I’m afraid it would go hard with Josh Huddy if they did lay hands on him. Well, every man to his work, says I. For my part I’d rather be out on the deck of the Betsy with a good stiff breeze and no shoal or shore in sight. Then if they can lay hands on me they’re welcome to. I’d never have come ashore now if it had n’t been for seeing Josh Huddy. We’re laying some plans together. Hello ! there comes the rain.”

As he spoke, the shower which had been threatening broke upon them and the rain began to fall. The two men sought the shelter of one of the largest of the nearby trees, but soon the drops were trickling upon them, and there was no prospect of a break in the storm. In spite of the rain the night was not



dark, for the moon was near the full, and they could see all about them.

"We might as well push on, my lad," said the captain after a few minutes had passed. "We shan't save ourselves from a good wetting if we stay here, and we might as well go ahead. You were to show me the way to the shore, and Josh Huddy said you'd do it, too; so bear away, and we'll not cast anchor here."

Peter started obediently, but as they resumed their journey the downpour increased and water seemed to fall almost in sheets. Suddenly the younger man beheld a clearing before them, and at once recognized the house upon it as the home of a family he well knew.

"There's the Stucker house ahead," he said quickly. "We might as well turn in there and wait till the shower has gone."

"We are as wet as the Betsy's keel now," protested the captain. "We shan't save anything by turning out of our course."

"But we may lose our way."

"Right you are. I've got a compass and you the chart. Stick to your chart, and I'm with you, if you're sure you know your landing-place."

Peter made no response except to turn quickly into the clearing and run swiftly toward the low house; his companion followed as best he could, but when they arrived at the low porch he was almost breathless.

"They've gone to bed," said Peter in a low voice. "There is n't a light to be seen about the place."

"Or gone away," suggested his companion.

"We'll soon know," said Peter, and as he spoke he lifted the heavy knocker and loudly announced their presence. When the summons had been repeated and still no one replied, Peter opened the door and entered.

The room was dark, and the dim light which came in through the windows only served to render the darkness within more intense. The two men left the door open behind them, and as they hesitated about entering farther before their presence was announced, Peter called loudly, —

"Mr. Stucker! Mr. Stucker!"

They waited for a reply, but the sound of the rain outside was all that could be heard.

"Mr. Stucker! Mr. Stucker!" again called Peter.

This time there was a response, but it was

of a character that startled the visitors. Suddenly some one rushed past them and made for the open door. So swiftly did he move that he had darted from the house before the captain or his companion was fully aware of what had occurred, and had disappeared in the darkness outside. Their consternation would not have been less could they have recognized, in the man who had fled from their presence, Moses, the fugitive slave of the Russells.

## CHAPTER IV

### A BARGAIN

“WHAT was that? What was it, captain?” exclaimed Peter.

“You know as much about it as I do,” replied Captain Warner. “We’ll look about us and see whether there are any more here. I don’t believe it was the man who lives here — Stucker, I think you said his name was.”

“Yes, — Stucker. But don’t you think we’d better start?”

“No, we must find out about this matter. Besides, it rains too hard to leave now. I’ve a flint and tinder, and we may be able to have a light.”

Alarmed as Peter was, he nevertheless began to look about the room, which was not so dark but he was able to see his way, and soon was so fortunate as to discover a candle on the low table. This was hastily lighted by the captain, and then they began to examine the house. The sound of the rain on the low roof almost drowned their voices when

they spoke, which was seldom. The doors and windows were open, and when the men started up the stairway, a sudden gust blew out their light.

Peter, in spite of his determination to be bold, clutched the arm of his companion and uttered a low exclamation of fear. The captain, however, did not speak, and soon the candle was lighted again. Then up the stairway they proceeded and made a careful inspection of the rooms above, but no one was discovered; and satisfied at last that they were alone in the house they returned to the room below.

"I was afraid we'd find the Stuckers in trouble," said Peter, "but they've only gone away."

"Yes, they've gone away, that's evident," said Captain Warner shortly, not feeling called upon to express any alarm he may have felt as to the reason for the house having been so strangely abandoned. "We'll leave it too, if only this shower will let up. You'd better give up your fool's errand, boy, and go with me aboard my brig. I'll give you a berth there, and you'll not have any more troubles. The Betsy's crew doesn't leave on such short notice as these Stuckers do."

"I can't do it," replied Peter quietly.

“ My place is on shore anyway, and besides I can’t leave now.”

“ Captain Josh would let you go, I ’m thinking.”

“ Perhaps so, but I can’t ask him.    Hark !  
What was that ? ”

Peter stopped abruptly, but it was too dark for him to see his companion’s face. Yet Captain Warner was as startled as his friend and was listening intently to the words of a weird song, which could be heard in the nearby forest above the sounds of the falling rain.

“ There never was night more foul and black — there never was fiercer blast —

Oh, many a prank the winds will play, ere this terrible night be past.”

For a moment the song ceased, but before either of the startled men spoke, the singer resumed in a voice shriller and more wild than before : —

“ The ships shall daunce on the yeasty waves, the billows  
shall daunce and roll,

And many a screech of despair shall rise from many a sin-  
sick soule !

Be merry, be merry ! The lightning’s flash itself were suf-  
ficient light,

And we ’ve got a phosphor-gleaming corse to be our candle  
to-night.”



Peter Van Mater was no coward, but it required all his strength of will to repress the shudder that crept over him. The lonely house, and the strange departure of the man or beast when they had entered, had of themselves made him fearful ; but there was something so wild and plaintive in the strange song he had heard that the thought of remaining longer where he was was unbearable.

“Let us go on,” he said quickly. “This is no place for us.”

“I’m thinking you’re right, lad. If you are sure you can find your way in this storm, we’ll start.”

As they turned to depart from the house, they suddenly stopped, however, as they beheld the figure of a man standing in the doorway.

“Who are you?” demanded the captain, grasping his gun, which, though wet and therefore useless for firing, was still no mean weapon in his hands.

The voice which responded was low and almost plaintive as if the speaker was mildly protesting against the harsh words of the captain.

“I’m Garrett, — I thought you knew. I’m Blackbeard’s friend,” he said.

“It’s Crazy Garrett ; he’s harmless,” said Peter in a low voice to the captain.

It was evident that the sturdy sailor was as relieved as his companion to learn that their strange visitor was not likely to harm them, and he quickly said, "Were you here a few minutes ago? Were you in the house when we came? Was that you we heard singing out in the woods just now?"

"I do not understand," replied Garrett slowly, evidently somewhat confused by the rapid questions of the captain. "I'm Garrett, that's all I know, except that Blackbeard left me a score of years ago to guard the treasure. You have n't come for that, have you?"

"We want no treasure. Why don't you come in out of the rain?" said Captain Warner not unkindly.

"Thank you kindly, sir. I shall tell Blackbeard of your goodness to me. Have you seen him this night?"

"No, I have n't seen him."

"'T is strange. I met him not long ago. He's come for the treasure, I think. He'll find me on guard at the gallows tree."

"When did you see him? What did he want? Where was he?" inquired the captain sharply.

"He was with his friends. He was kind to me; he always was. Some people say he

was not always so, but he was good to Garrett. Did you ever hear his voice? Hark! I hear it now!" and as the poor demented man spoke, he turned toward the door as if he was listening to sounds his companions could not hear.

There were other sounds, however, which were heard, though they bore no relation to Garrett's words, for, with a shout, men rushed into the room. They came from front and rear, and in the dim light the place soon seemed to the startled occupants to be filled with them. There were shouts and calls, a quick struggle, but almost in less time than it takes to record it, both Captain Warner and Peter Van Mater were overpowered and disarmed, and were prisoners in the hands of the band which had so unexpectedly attacked them.

"Let us have a light here!" said some one sharply.

"We'd better make a light of the house itself, Phil," replied some one. "We can take these men with us and search them on the way, or do what we choose with them, and ashes, like dead men, will tell no tales."

"Nay, nay! One might as well try to set fire to the thunder-heads as to try to burn this water-soaked shanty to-night. Even if

we could start a blaze here, it would only call all the neighbors from miles around. We've had all the attention we desire for one night, I'm thinking. One man is enough to lose just now."

"'T was his own fault," murmured the one who had been addressed as "Phil."

"That may be, but it does not help us now. Use your tinder, somebody! There must be a candle somewhere hereabouts, for the Stuckers haven't been gone long, if Moses has told us the truth, and I don't believe the black rascal would lie to us. Stir yourselves."

Peter could hear the men stumbling about in the darkness, and the fear in his heart was in nowise lessened by their words and actions. He knew nothing of what had occurred in the Russell household after his departure, but he did know the name by which one of the men had been addressed by his companion, and if his conjectures should prove to be correct, his own predicament, as well as that of the sturdy captain, would be no slight one.

"Ha! Here we are!" exclaimed one of the men, and in a brief time the candle which had been left on the rude table in the centre of the room was lighted.

There was a silence deep and intense as the one who seemed to be the leader grasped the candlestick, and holding it aloft turned to view the prisoners they had secured. The rain dashed against the house, and the thunder seemed to shake the very foundations of the building. The outer darkness was rendered more intense by the flashes of the lightning and the beams of the little candle which flickered and sputtered in the hands of the man who stood before Peter and the captain.

And Peter had instantly recognized him as Lippencott, the well known leader of one of the Tory bands of Old Monmouth. Directly behind him was standing Phil White, whom Peter had seen many a time before the beginning of the war, when he had been engaged in his peaceful occupation of carpentering. And since the struggle had been going on, he had known of his evil deeds and the terror which his name created among the patriots of the region. The sight was not one that brought any hope to the heart of the troubled lad, we may be well assured.

Apparently the men had not recognized either of their prisoners, which was not to be wondered at, for Captain Warner of late years had seldom been ashore in the vicinity, and

Peter had grown so rapidly within the past four or five years that even his friends declared they had difficulty in recognizing him.

"Not very much of a capture," muttered Lippencott, after he had peered into the faces of the two prisoners. "However, we'll search them and see what we can find on them. One can't always tell from the looks of a man how much he may be worth."

There was a gleam in the eyes of Captain Warner as he heard the words, and for a moment Peter was afraid that his companion was about to resist or attempt to break from the house; but whatever may have been the impulse, the little captain quickly suppressed it and submitted quietly to the search. A small sum of money was found upon his person, and one or two papers that evidently interested Lippencott, but that was all. Upon Peter neither money nor papers were discovered.

"There's no use in bothering ourselves with these fellows," said Phil White, after the search had been completed. "Let us leave them, or string them up, and go on."

"We'll find a use for them," replied Lippencott. "You know the offer that was made us."



"If they 'll take such fellows."

"They 'll take them fast enough. We'll wait a while now till the storm blows over, and then we'll have them journey on with us to the shore."

The men seated themselves on the floor and prepared to wait for the shower to pass.

There were already signs that the rain would soon cease, and so no one rebelled against Lippencott's demand. Peter watched the men keenly in the dim light, but his anxiety increased as the moments passed. There was little to be expected from such men. Several times he overheard the name "Russell" mentioned in the conversation which the men carried on in low tones; but it conveyed little meaning to him, for he was ignorant of the tragedy which had been enacted in that household.

When a half hour had elapsed, he was startled as Captain Warner rose to his feet, and addressing Lippencott, who plainly was the leading spirit in the band, said, "What 'll you take to let me go?"

"Here! search this man again!" said the leader sharply. "He may have some coin about him yet."

Again the little captain was compelled to

submit, but a thorough examination failed to reveal the longed-for wealth.

"I'm in earnest," said the captain at last, when his captors desisted. "I'll pay you well, if you'll let me go."

Lippencott evidently was puzzled. Had his prisoner any money about him which they had failed to find? It did not seem probable, and in something of the same good-natured tones which the prisoner had used, he said, "What'll you give me?"

"A joe."

"Too little."

"I'll give you two joes and a half. That's all I can pay, for it's all I've got. Besides, it's all I'm worth."

Lippencott hesitated, and then said, "The storm is over, and we must be going. You haven't any money, and must come along with us."

"But I mean what I say. Two and a half joes are not picked up every day. You'd better take them, as I say, for you'll never have them otherwise. I provided for just such fellows as you when I came."

"All right. Hand them over."

"But how shall I know that you'll live up to your bargain? You may take the money

and then keep me. I must have that part understood before I agree."

"I know you can't do it, but I'm willing to chance it. Come out here with me, and as soon as you've paid me you're free."

"Agreed," said Captain Warner. "Now untie my hands."

One of his arms was freed, and then he and the leader went out of the house, followed by the mocking glances of the band. When they were outside, Captain Warner stooped, drew the coins from a place between the soles of his shoes, then thrust the money into Lippencott's hand, and, before the latter could fairly recover from his surprise, turned sharply about and quickly disappeared in the woods.

## CHAPTER V

### THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

IN the house of the Russells the fall of Sergeant John had served to renew the courage of the attacking party, which, with the death of Gillian, had for a moment apparently forsaken them. Phil White had heard the call of a child in the room above, and with two of his companions rushed up the rude stairway.

There he was met by the young soldier's wife, whose eyes were flashing, though her cheeks were deadly pale. The smoke and the reports of the guns were sufficient of themselves to disclose the peril, if nothing more, of those below; and as the Tory carpenter and his comrades roughly hailed her and demanded to know the place where the money, which Mr. Russell was reported to have, was concealed, she boldly replied: —

“There is no money in this house. Think you we would hide valuables here when we knew such ruffians as you were abroad?”

The carpenter laughed, and started to seize

the frightened woman, when a childish voice was heard in the adjoining room.

"Grandmother! Grandmother! Where is the gun? Who shoot the gun? Let me get up."

"King John" had been placed upon the bed, and his grandmother was sitting beside him, striving desperately to keep him quiet at the same time, when the reports of the guns in the room below indicated only too clearly that a terrible struggle was going on there. And her husband and son were the only ones to defend the place!

"Oh, ho!" called Phil White. "Blows the wind from that quarter? Then we shall soon find the old man's sock," and as he spoke, with his companions he released the terrified woman and rushed into the room from which "King John's" voice had been heard.

"Tell me where the money is," he demanded as he entered. "Be quick about it too, or we'll answer the boy's question ourselves."

"There's no money here," sobbed Mistress Russell. "If there was I would gladly give it to you. Oh, do not harm the little lad!" she begged as in the dim light she saw

the men raise their guns and aim them directly at her grandchild.

"Tell us where the place is, then," demanded White roughly. "It's the sock or the boy, and you must take your choice. Speak up and be quick about it, too!"

A cry of anguish from Mistress Russell, a cry echoed by her daughter-in-law who had now rushed into the room, could not drown the reports of the guns which rang out together. There was no sound from the bed, and in the midst of the stifling smoke for a moment there was a silence as of death itself.<sup>1</sup>

The silence was broken by a cry such as a wild beast might have made, as the mother, in the wildness of her agony, threw herself upon the brutal men and strove desperately to make her way to the bedside of her boy. For a moment there was a struggle which made even White exert himself to the utmost to protect himself from the onslaught, but his strength was far greater than that of the heartbroken mother, and he was about to throw her roughly on the bed beside the body of her child when he paused for a moment

<sup>1</sup>The old records inform us that five balls were fired into the body of the little lad, and, incredible as the story seems, it is said he lived and grew to be a man strong and vigorous.



abruptly as he heard a call from below. The call was repeated ; and Lippencott, rushing to the foot of the stairway, shouted : “ Come on, White ! Come ! We’ve got to get out of this ! The militia are coming. Be quick ! ”

Instantly the three men darted from the room and with long leaps rushed down the stairs. In a moment they with their companions had departed from the house ; and a silence as of death itself rested upon the home where a few minutes before a happy household, rejoicing in the return of the long absent one, had assembled about the supper-table.

It is not the purpose of this story to enter into the details of the heartrending scene which followed the attack upon the Russells. In the old annals it is set down merely as an incident in the struggle of the Revolution. An “ incident ” it was, but as straws are said to indicate the direction in which the wind is blowing, so this event was indicative of the horror, the sorrow, the agonizing grief which follow in the wake of war. War glorious ? Is death less death, or is sorrow less sad because they come in the guise of war ? There may be times when such a struggle may be necessary, and perhaps the war of the Revolution was as justifiable as any strife ever

entered upon, but even then the suffering and sorrow were never able to recompense those who battled for the right as they saw it. Heroism? Yes, heroism that was sublime; and it is far from the purpose of this book to attempt to belittle it. But heroism does not depend upon guns alone, nor is a time of war the only time when the noblest qualities of life can be displayed.

Many a man has had his conflict in times of peace, and has displayed qualities of heart and mind not one whit behind those which are told of wartime. The fight with evil, the struggle with temptation, the unselfish devotion to principle, the heroic endurance of what is known to be necessary, the patience and devotion to be found in many a humble home to-day, are all as noble as the bravery on the battle-field, though no pen but that of the recording angel may ever have written of the contests. Sometimes it requires a nobility and courage of as high an order to live as it does at other times to die for the right. "It is beautiful to die for one's country," sang one of the world's sweetest singers, and no one can learn of the martyrs to liberty or the heroes of the faith without feeling the truth and beauty of the poet's words; but

there are times when it is just as beautiful to live for one's country, and the highest patriotism can be displayed by the men who live as well as it was displayed by those who died. War may be right at times, but its evils are no less evil; and though the true patriot may be willing and even eager to answer his country's call in the hour of direst need, surely that is not the only hour when the fatherland calls, or when the love of home and the determination to do right can be displayed.

Perhaps no thoughts of any such things were in the minds of the grief-stricken women, whose sorrow is a necessary part in this story, and whose ruined home it becomes necessary for us to enter before we can follow the later events of this record. The sound of the hurried retreat had hardly ceased before Hester, Sergeant John's wife, roused herself. There was no time now for tears, and, despite her fear of the return of the band, she rushed down the stairway, and in a moment a candle was shedding its beams upon the saddest scene upon which she ever had looked.

Directly across the threshold lay the body of Gillian, the Tory leader of the band. A single glance convinced her that she had nothing to fear from him, for war and peace were both alike to him now.

Near him was the body of her father-in-law. His calm sweet face, with its crown of silver hair, looked up at her, but with eyes that saw not and with ears that never again would hear. Hastily repressing the sob which arose at the sight, she instantly turned to her husband, who was lying upon his face with his gun still clutched in his right hand. Placing her candle upon the floor, she knelt by his side and endeavored to turn the face so that she might convince herself of the terrible truth which she feared. As she placed her hands upon the head, a great cry escaped her lips when the eyes opened and her husband said: "I — I — am all right, — I think, my dear, — I shall be all right soon."

"Thank God! Oh, thank God," exclaimed the young wife, for the first time giving way to her sorrow and breaking into a flood of tears. Instantly she recalled herself and said, "I'll be back in a moment, John; I must go to my boy. Oh, my poor, poor lad!" and again the sobs broke forth.

She had quickly folded and placed an old shawl under her husband's head, and then, as she grasped the candle and started to run up the stairs, a scream of terror escaped her lips, for standing directly in front of the door

was a man whom she at first took to be one of the band returned to complete the sad work they had begun.

"Moses he'p yo', Mis' Hestah."

"Oh, Moses! Is that you? Are you alone?" she exclaimed, as she quickly recognized the runaway slave.

"Yah, all 'lone. Moses he'p yo'."

It was evident that he was not sure of the welcome he would receive, but even his presence was a relief to the troubled woman. There was no time for reproaches or questions, and Hester eagerly said, as she started once more up the stairway, "Look to your master, Moses. He's hurt. I'll be back in a moment. Be careful with him."

Even as she ran, she could see the black man enter, and then in a moment, with the candle still in her hand, she was in the room above. The elder woman was lying on the bed beside the child, and without waiting to speak to her, the frantic mother bent over her boy. Her joy was too great for utterance when she discovered that he was still breathing, and then rousing her mother-in-law from the stupor into which she apparently had fallen, she began to care for the unconscious sufferer. Her labors were interrupted by the

entrance of the huge Moses, who was bearing the wounded sergeant in his arms. John looked for a moment at the scene before him and then said softly, "Is he dead?"

"No, no, not yet. He may live after all. God may be good to us."

"Put me down on the bed, Moses," said John. "Put me right by the side of 'King John'."

There were no questions asked of the runaway as to the reason for his return. It was a time for labor, not for words. For hours the mother and the slave worked over the wounded boy, the sergeant insisting upon all the care being given "King John," and declaring that he himself was all right and could wait. It was not selfishness nor was it mere thoughtlessness that made them apparently unmindful of the dead. Hester had not told her husband of the loss, nor had she as yet spoken to her mother-in-law. It was simply the call of the living which must first be heeded; but as soon as the most necessary work had been done, and it was evident that both her husband and boy had a good chance to recover, she turned about to seek the elder woman and provide for the wants of the fallen.



To her surprise her mother-in-law was not to be seen. Whispering a word of endearment to her patients, and promising speedily to return, Hester beckoned to Moses to follow her, and taking the candle from its resting place on the quaint old bureau, she led the way to the room below.

There she found the elder woman, who had already lighted a candle and had made the discovery which she had feared to announce. With face almost as white as that of her fallen husband, Mistress Russell was moving quietly about the room and providing for the removal of the body of the old man to its proper place.

As soon as this had been done, Hester turned to Moses and said, "You must go at once to the neighbors. Go to the Stillwagons and the Smiths, and tell the men folk to come with the women."

As Moses departed, and the full sense of the loneliness of her position swept over her, Hester with trembling hands barred the heavy door and then returned to her task in the room above.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MESSENGER

It is not the purpose of this story to enter, more deeply than may be necessary to explain the stirring events which are a part of this tale, into the harrowing scenes which followed the attack on the Russell household.

On the second day after the death of the old man, a little group of sorrowing neighbors were assembled with the two women beneath a spreading chestnut tree on the border of the Russell place, and stood with uncovered heads while the aged preacher offered a prayer and spoke the last few words over the mortal remains of John Russell. A little mound, without a headstone of any kind, then marked the spot where the body had been committed to the earth ; and the friends, with heavy hearts and sad forebodings, not knowing who would be the next to undergo the terrible experience, returned to their own abodes, and the two women reëntered their house to care for the living now that the last sad rites for the dead had been performed.

The body of Gillian, the infamous leader of those who had made the dastardly attack, had already been buried, and now nothing remained to be done except to nurse Sergeant John and "the King" back to health. And apparently that task was to be no light one. The little lad had not spoken since the time when he had been shot, and though his father was able to speak, it required no special knowledge to know that his wound was a serious one, and that only the best of care would restore him to anything like his former condition of strength and vigor.

Only one event of interest had occurred in the home since the overwhelming sorrow had come upon it, and that was the return of Captain Warner for a brief visit on the very night when the attack had been made. He explained that in the interview he had had with Lippencott, the Tory had related the story of the attack and the loss of their own leader. Lippencott declared that he himself was responsible for the saving of the life of Sergeant John Russell, for when the latter was lying wounded and unconscious upon the floor, just before the hurried departure of the band which had been caused by the false announcement of Moses that a force of the

militia was approaching, one of the men had raised his gun and was about to fire again upon the fallen soldier, "to make sure," as he said, "that the sergeant would not be able to report the attack." The Tory declared that he himself had grasped the gun-barrel, determined to save the man, and that it was due to him alone that Sergeant John's life had been spared. He had not been unmindful of the family relations, Lippencott explained, — an explanation which, in the light of the recent events, doubtless failed to afford much comfort to either of the sorrowing women.

Captain Warner also briefly related the story of the capture of himself and Little Peter, and then explained how he had been able to purchase his own release for two and a half joes; but his companion without doubt had been carried away by the band and would soon in all probability be a prisoner in New York, as it was reported his father was and had been before him.

The captain had determined to return to the Russell home after Lippencott had related his story, and see for himself whether the family was in trouble or not. His stay, however, was of necessity a brief one, though he did all in his power to assist the troubled

women. As soon as the neighbors began to arrive he bade all farewell, after promising to return as soon as possible and assist in capturing the Tories who had brought such suffering and sorrow upon an innocent household.

Captain Warner was honest enough in his desire and promise ; but like all of us he knew nothing of the future, and doubtless it would have seemed incredible to him if any one had declared that he would not see the Jersey shore after his departure until many a weary month had passed. And yet such an one would have spoken truly, as we shall learn in the course of this story.

Two days passed after the dead had been laid away, and both Mistress Russell and her daughter-in-law were tireless in their care of the sufferers. Perhaps the very necessity of rousing themselves to care for the living so soon after the loss of the head of the household was the very best thing that could have happened to them. Be that as it may, they were both noble and strong-hearted women, and resolutely set about the task. The doors were doubly barred at night, and in the daytime a more or less careful watch was maintained. Directly after the attack doubtless there was no safer place in all of Old Mon-

mouth than this lonely home, for Tories and pine robbers were not unlike the lightning in that they seldom struck twice in the same spot. But the natural anxiety of both Hester Russell and her aged mother-in-law was too keen to enable them to think soberly of such matters, and in the constant fear of another attack there was slight relief to be found.

One morning Hester was busy in the room in which her husband and "King John" were lying side by side upon the high bed. The sergeant evidently was somewhat improved, but the lad only moaned or uttered incoherent words when he stirred uneasily.

"That 's the hardest thing of all to bear," said John slowly, as his eyes rested for a moment upon his boy. "If I could just take his suffering on myself I would n't mind it."

"But you can't," replied his wife quietly.

"No, I can't," said John, unable to keep back the tears that began to trickle down his cheeks.

"Hush! Hush, my dear," said Hester, quickly brushing away his tears as she spoke, and partly turning her own face away that he might not see that she too was as strongly affected as he.

"You must not think of such things now.



You must do your best to get well yourself, and then we can care for our boy. He is doing well, much better than I dared to hope."

Hester had recovered her self-control now, and, mother-like, was striving to provide of her own strength for the weakness of those she loved.

"Yes, yes, I know; but though I can't move my body, my mind is as active as ever. There is one thing I have decided."

"What is that?" said Hester quickly.

"I shall send word to Captain Walton and seek permission to leave my company until I have run these rascals to cover."

"No, no, John, you must not do that."

"But I must, and I shall."

"You can do nothing now, John. You could not restore your poor father to us if you shot every Tory in Old Monmouth. Besides, revenge is not yours, nor is it right. You remember who said, 'Vengeance is mine: I will repay.' Surely you can leave even these dreadful men in the hands of their maker."

"It is not 'vengeance,' as you call it, I want. But who knows what these men will do next? Some other man will be taken, or

they may favor us with another visit. Old Monmouth will never be safe till such rascals are brought to justice, and I know not who would have a stronger motive than I in doing it. I shall send word to Captain Walton at once."

"There is time enough for that, John. You will not be able to do anything for weeks yet, I fear. Meanwhile you can do your best to get well, and then you can carry out this plan of yours."

"I shall send now, this very day," replied the sergeant decidedly.

Hester Russell, worried though she was over the excitement of her husband and fearful that evil results would follow it, was too wise a woman openly to oppose him. She therefore apparently acquiesced in his decision, and said quietly, "How will you get word to the captain, John?"

"I'll send Moses."

"Do you think it will be safe? Can you trust him?"

"Trust him? No. He'll follow the first man that he meets if he can promise him anything. But it's Moses or nobody, so I'll make use of him. What does he have to say about his coming back to us? I verily be-

lieve he was the one to lead Gillian's band here."

"He says he could not keep away after he heard we were in trouble. He sobbed and cried like a child when he found out what had happened to your father and 'King John' here;" and as she spoke she rose from her chair and went around to the other side of the bed, where she bent over the little sufferer, and whispered a few words of comfort as she touched his lips with water.

"Moses can't be trusted," said John. "I know that, but I shall have to take my chances. You write the letter, Hester, as I give you the words."

Thus bidden, Hester took the goose-quill pen and wrote the letter which her husband dictated to Captain Walton. In it John related the story of the attack, its sad ending, and the necessity he was under of doing what lay in his power to assist his family for the present and of helping to bring the perpetrators of the outrage to justice. He made no mention of his own condition, but unbeknown to him his wife added a few words of her own, which, though they were spelled indifferently well, doubtless would inform the worthy captain of the true state of the case and

incline his heart to grant the request she was as eager as her husband to make.

As soon as the letter was written, and sealed before John could ask to read it, Hester rose to depart from the room, thinking that in her absence her husband would be compelled to rest. But she speedily discovered that Sergeant John had no thought of allowing the matter to rest there.

"Now send Moses to me, and I'll get this epistle started on its way," he said.

"I don't know where he is," she replied evasively.

"He can't be far away. If you call, he'll come, I think."

"But Moses is the only one to do the work on the place. What should we do if he did n't come back?" she persisted.

"I'll call him," said John quickly, striving to move from the bed, but he fell back helpless, and could not check the groan which the effort cost him.

"No, no, John," said Hester. "I'll do anything you want if you'll only lie still. You must n't move, you must n't even try to move."

She instantly left the room and speedily returned with Moses, who stood beside the

bed looking in every direction except at the suffering man.

"Now, Moses," said John, striving to speak sternly. "What have you to say for yourself? Speak up, boy!"

"Nuffin', nuffin'. Can't say nuffin', Massa John."

"That's right. If I gave you what you deserved, Moses, what do you think you'd have?"

"Don' know. Speck Massa John know."

"You know, too. Now if you can go straight to Captain Walton's camp with this letter and bring me an answer, I'll forget what it was. If you fail, I'll remember it all and some things beside. You hear me, Moses?"

"Yas, sah; yas, sah," replied the black man eagerly.

"Well, then, you're to start right away. The grass grows fast in May, but you must n't let a spear grow under your feet. Off with you."

Moses departed, and though the wounded man watched him keenly, not once did the slave glance toward the bed. John shook his head when the man was gone, as if he had no great faith in the success which would attend

the efforts of the black ; but his thoughts were instantly recalled when he heard through the open window the voice of some one singing in the woods.

“Some shall be washed alive on shore to die on the gallows tree.

But gold or wife or children deare, none, none shall ever live to see.”

Surely there could be but one man to sing that song, and in a strange excitement John called sharply : —

“Hester ! Hester ! Send Garrett to me ! Send him at once ! I must see him !”

In a few minutes Garrett followed John’s wife into the room and then stood still, staring blankly from the wounded man to “King John,” and then back at the woman by his side, as if he was dimly striving to understand what the meaning of the strange spectacle was, and why he had been summoned to share it.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE CREW OF THE POLLY

WHEN Peter Van Mater found that his friend Captain Warner had really departed, and that he had been left alone in the midst of the Tory band, his feelings may well be imagined. Apparently the captain had given him no thought, and had been so intent upon securing his own release that the welfare or even the safety of the lad who had led the way through the forest was not even considered.

The storm had now ceased, and the heavy clouds, as they parted, revealed the presence of the rising moon. In the increasing light Peter was able to observe his captors more clearly, and from their restlessness and the few words of their conversation he could overhear it was not long before even his own predicament was for the moment pushed into the background.

It became evident that they had visited the Russell homestead, and that a misfortune of some kind had befallen their leader Gillian,

but just what it was he was unable to determine. From them he also discovered that the Stuckers had abandoned their house before the Tories had set forth on their journey, and they had found it unoccupied on their way up from the shore. Eager as the lad was to learn what had befallen the Russells, or just what the result of this raid had been, he was not able to hear a word which enlightened him.

The return of Lippencott at this moment recalled the thoughts of all, and the leader was greeted by White as he entered the house : —

“Where’s your man, Lippencott? Did he get away?”

“I let him go.”

“Let him go? What for?” White was evidently angry, and it was also plain that his companions in a measure shared his feeling.

“He paid me what he agreed to, and then I lived up to my part of the bargain,” said Lippencott coolly.

“Did he really have any money?”

“Yes, he gave me the two and a half joes. He had them hidden between the soles of his shoes. He put them in my hand and was gone before I fairly knew what he was doing.”

“That’s not bad,” said White with a laugh.

"If he could still have the money about him after our search, he's almost entitled to keep it. But I thought you'd take the coin and then bring him back with you."

"You don't know Warner, or you would n't talk that way."

"Were you afraid of him? He's a little fellow."

"That may be as you say, and doubtless his size is not much to boast of, but you can't always judge of a man by that. I'd sooner meet Adam Hyler than Warner almost any day. At all events he's gone; and as I hold the money, we'll have to be content."

"We'd better give the boy another search before we start," said White. "He may have a joe or two in the soles of his shoes, and 't would be a pity to make him carry that load."

Lippencott laughed and made no objection, and so Peter was compelled to submit to another search. But as the lad had no money on his person, the efforts of the Tories were still unavailing. "One could n't get blood out of a stone," was the way Lippencott expressed it, when at last they gave up the attempt.

The march was now resumed, and Peter was compelled to walk in the midst of the

band. Apparently slight heed was given him, but he well understood that any attempt to escape would bring upon him a shot from one of the guns in their hands. Accordingly, for mile after mile he was as silent as his silent companions. He could readily see that they were moving toward the shore, but he could not conjecture where the place was which they were seeking. Nor had a word been spoken as to the disposition they were likely to make of him.

Whatever this should prove to be, it would be bad enough in any event, Peter well knew; and it was with a heavy heart that he followed his captors. Thoughts of his father in the Sugar House in New York were forgotten now in his anxiety for his brothers and sisters whom he had left behind. No one except the Tories knew or were likely to know of his misfortune, and the heavy-hearted lad again and again found himself picturing the misery and anxiety which were sure to be theirs when the passing days should make certain the fact that he was gone and would not return.

However, Peter gave no expression to his thoughts and still moved silently on with the band. Lippencott and White assumed con-

trol, and the others willingly obeyed their directions.

There was a faint streak of gray above the eastern horizon when at last they approached the ocean, and Peter knew that they were not far from the Hook. Soon he could see the tossing waves in the distance capped with white and still showing the effect of the storm of the preceding night. The gulls were flying low along the beach, and their sharp cries seemed to the troubled boy to be strangely sad and weird. Not far from the shore he saw a ship riding at anchor, and he knew as soon as he glanced at her that she was a stranger in this part of the world. He noticed her trim and graceful build, and also concluded that she was well laden, from the manner in which she rested on the water.

"There's the Polly," said White as he caught sight of the vessel.

"Yes. She came in late yesterday afternoon," said Lippencott.

"Where's she bound? New York, I suppose, loaded well with produce."

"No. She's not going to touch at New York."

"Not going to New York? Where then?" and White again gazed curiously at the ship before them.

“London.”

“You don’t mean it? She’s from the South, is n’t she?”

“Yes. Charleston.”

“What’s she doing up here off the Jersey shore then? She’s away out of her course.”

“The Polly knows what she’s about. She came up here to take a man aboard. I don’t understand what she’s waiting for, unless it is that her passenger has n’t shown up. If she knows when she’s well off she’ll put out of this in a hurry.”

“Why? What’s wrong?” demanded White sharply.

“Captain Warner and his brig Betsy, that’s what,” retorted Lippencott. “If the Betsy gets after her the Polly won’t stand any show at all.”

“Where is the Betsy?”

“That’s more than I can tell you; but when Captain Warner is around you can make up your mind in very short metre that his brig is n’t very far away. White, I believe I’ll signal and let ’em know the danger they’re in.”

Lippencott at once acted upon his own suggestion. The band halted, and the leader went a little farther up the shore to a dune



that rose to a greater height than any other spot on the beach, and taking off his coat waved it aloft on the barrel of his gun. Several minutes passed before the signal was seen on board the Polly ; but at last a yawl was seen to have left the ship and to be approaching the shore.

Lippencott's followers, with Peter still in their midst, now assembled near the water and watched the approaching boat, as it was driven swiftly forward by the oars of a half dozen sturdy sailors. In the stern was seated an officer who directed the course, and soon the yawl was near the breakers. Then it halted for a moment, until just the wave the officer was waiting for was seen to be approaching, and at a word from him the men gave way together. The yawl was lifted high on the crest and hurled forward with tremendous speed. Just before the breaker fell the men leaped overboard ; several of Lippencott's followers at the same moment dashed into the water, and by the combined efforts of all the boat was hauled up on the sand, while the officer turned to Lippencott to inquire the meaning of the signal he had displayed. " What's wrong ? What d'ye want ? " he demanded gruffly.

“I wanted to tell you that Captain Warner and the Betsy are somewhere around here, and put you on your guard.”

“Captain Warner and the Betsy? Who’s he, and who’s she?” demanded the officer in a tone still more surly than that which he had used before.

“The Betsy’s the best — or rather the worst — privateer the Yankees have along the Jersey shore. If she gets her eye on you you’ll run to cover, I’m telling you. I thought it was only fair to give you warning.”

“Humph! I don’t know that I’m afraid of any Jersey privateer. Nobody’s warned me of her — the Betsy, do you say? I reckon if there was much in it, some one at the fort would have told me afore this.”

“When do you sail?” inquired Lippencott quietly.

“That’s as may be. We ought to have been out of this hours ago, but I’m waiting for a man from New York. He agreed to be here last night, but I’ve had to send up to the city for him. He wanted passage to London.”

“You’re a good-natured skipper to wait,” laughed Lippencott.

“Good-natured? Humph! You ask my men about that. They may know more about that than you do. I shan’t wait much longer though, gold or no gold. The man is to pay me well,” he growled, as if he felt obliged to explain the cause of his willingness to delay. “I’m a bit short-handed though,” he added, “and I shall be glad to get out o’ sight of the shore. Then, if this Cap’n Warner of yours in his Betsy can overhaul us they’re welcome to do it.”

White had been listening to the interview, having taken no part in the conversation until the officer explained that he was short-handed. That fact evidently suggested something to his mind, for, advancing quickly, he spoke a few low words to Lippencott, who evidently was impressed by what his companion was saying.

As White finished, his friend nodded his head approvingly, and looking up again at the officer he said, “Did I understand you to say that you were short-handed?”

“That’s what you did, most likely, for it’s true.”

“Do you want another man?”

“Yes, if he’s of the right stamp. Maybe you want to ship?”

"No, but this man will," and as he spoke Lippencott pointed at Peter.

The lad's heart almost stopped beating and his face became white as he heard the words. He started to protest, but one glance at the men about him showed clearly the uselessness of any appeal. Lippencott meanwhile had advanced close to the officer, and in low words was evidently explaining something to him. It was also plain that the officer was interested, and as soon as Lippencott ceased, he said quickly, "I'm agreed. Then you want to ship with my crew, do ye, lad?" He turned to Peter as he said this, and looked at him out of a pair of eyes that clearly betrayed the disposition of their owner.

"No," said Peter quietly.

"Well, your natural guardians seem to be of another mind, and I reckon I'll follow their lead. Get aboard with ye and we'll be off, for fear Cap'n Warner or his Betsy will come along and sail away with the Polly afore I can get on board. Somehow I feel that I'd like to be aboard when that event takes place."

The man plainly had no fear of the Jersey privateer, and was not very grateful to Lippencott for his warning. However, he had secured an additional man for his crew by

coming ashore, and therefore was not inclined to find any further fault.

At his word Peter took his place in the yawl. The men pushed the awkward craft out into the water, and began to row toward the Polly. Peter looked wistfully back at the receding Jersey shore, even now not fully comprehending the misfortune which had befallen him. Farther and farther away appeared the little group of Tories who were still standing on the beach ; and soon the yawl drew alongside the ship, and Peter with the others were quickly on the deck.

## CHAPTER VIII

### A CHASE

HOPELESS as the lad was when he found himself in the midst of the crew, he nevertheless was conscious as he gazed about him that his coming had produced but little interest. As he was not desirous at the time of attracting any attention, perhaps the neglect was a source of comfort; but be that as it may, he found himself for the moment looking at a sail not very far away.

“ ’T is a strange sail that, mate,” one of the sailors was saying to his companion; “ I wonder what she may be.”

“ The cap’n’s somewhat o’ your opinion, I’m thinking,” replied the other.

The captain, Peter discovered, was none other than the very man who had come ashore in the yawl in response to Lippencott’s signal, and his actions at once confirmed the opinion expressed by the sailor.

He took his glass and quickly ascended the mainmast, where he remained for several



minutes, evidently studying the appearance and movements of the approaching stranger.

That something was wrong became evident when he speedily returned to the deck and began to shout his orders for the ship to make sail immediately. His crew shared in the excitement, and Peter speedily learned that any former neglect as to a welcome on board the Polly was more than atoned for now. He was gruffly ordered aloft, and as he had had sufficient experience to enable him to understand what was expected of him, he nimbly obeyed.

As he clambered up the rigging he glanced frequently at the sail which had created such commotion on board the schooner, and as he discovered that she was a brig and evidently armed, the hope which had almost died out in his heart instantly revived. There was more than a mere hope that she might prove to be the Elizabeth, or Betsy, as Captain Warner preferred to call his fleet privateer, and if it should be, then there was a chance of escape for him after all. The reaction was so sharp that Peter began to whistle at his work. The Polly, as has been said, was well laden, and in a chase there was slight doubt as to the outcome. The danger most to be feared

was from some gunboat of the enemy which might be concealed beyond the Narrows, that at the knowledge of what was occurring off the shore might rush to the aid of her companion.

The Polly was soon moving through the waters at a pace which caused Peter to glance uneasily at the sail behind them. She had been creeping nearer all the time, and the conviction that she was indeed the Betsy herself was deepened in the heart of the excited lad. If only she should be able to overhaul the schooner, then there would be release for him almost before he had fairly realized what his capture meant. On the other hand, if she should fail — Peter could not repress the shudder which crept over him at the thought. A long voyage across the ocean, the possibility of a stay in some of the English prisons, of which he had already heard much, or of what might prove to be even worse, the sailing again with the crew of the Polly to some of the uttermost parts of the earth.

Peter's interest in the race therefore was not unnatural, and his eagerness was manifestly shared by all on board, though from very different motives.

Not more than a quarter of an hour had

passed before it became evident to all that the pursuing boat was rapidly gaining. The captain of the Polly had planned to put to sea, all thoughts of his would-be passenger and his gold being ignored now in the one desire to shake off his enemy.

As he perceived that he would not be able to outstrip his pursuer, the Polly's captain began to give orders for changing the course of the vessel, and was hoping to retrace his way and enter through the Narrows into safety ; but a word of protest from his mate caused him to abandon the attempt. Already the brig was in a position to cut off any such attempt, and the only thing that remained for the Polly to do was to keep on her way as she had begun. Some friend might appear, or the wind might change, or something happen in the captain's favor so that he might continue the flight till nightfall, and then in the open sea shake off the persistent brig which was holding doggedly to her task.

The Polly was by this time well out of sight of land. The sun had climbed higher in the heavens, but not a ray of hope for the fleeing vessel had been found. Peter had not touched a morsel of food since the preceding evening, but he felt no sense of hunger.

At whatever task he was laboring, — and every man on board was kept busy by the rough commander, who seemed to be everywhere at once, — his eyes were seldom turned away from the brig, which now loomed up more distinctly than ever. If the wind did not die down she would surely succeed in overhauling them. Peter felt the wind against his face, and could hear it as it swept through the rigging. For the present at least he had nothing to fear on that score.

The brig was within range now, and her forward guns could be seen by those on board the Polly. Why she did not use them Peter could not understand. He was so eager and excited that he had no thought of the danger, nor did he stop to think of the desire of the brig to avoid anything that might bring aid to the schooner she was pursuing. Apparently she was confident that she would be able to overtake her victim without resorting to the use of her guns, and if Peter Van Mater had stopped to observe more carefully he would have been satisfied with the conclusion of the captain of the brig.

The exciting race continued, however, as if both vessels were aware of the labors which were expected of them. In recent years fleet

yachts representing the two countries which were then at war have sailed over a part of the very same course which the Polly and the Betsy were following so many years ago. Keen as is the interest and sharp as is the rivalry now manifested in the friendly contests, neither feeling, we may be sure, could for a moment be compared with the excitement of the two crews on that far-away morning. The gain of either would be at the expense of the other, while to both alike there was the common thought of what a capture would mean, for there was no longer any doubt in the minds of the Polly's crew as to the character of the swift-sailing brig in their rear.

Another half hour passed, and still the brig was steadily gaining. The low-lying Jersey shore had long since faded from sight. The brisk wind had capped all the billows with white, and the beams of the sun were beating down upon the decks with something of the heat of summer.

Every stitch of canvas had been set, and many of the sailors were on deck now, watching the movements of the other vessel and waiting for the part which the wind must play in the issue of the race.

By the end of another half hour each crew could readily discern the men on the rival deck. Still the *Betsy* had not spoken, though a polished brass cannon flashed in the sunlight with a hint of the more ominous flash it might give if the occasion demanded it. The brig now seemed to gain by leaps and bounds. She evidently was handled with consummate skill, and Peter was wondering whether Captain Warner had returned to her or not. If he had not been able to regain his vessel, he certainly had able lieutenants.

The crew of the *Polly* were all silent now, and with glum faces were intently watching the approaching brig, the captain displaying the fiercest anger of all, as perhaps was only natural. Nearer and nearer crept the *Betsy*, and soon the men on the *Polly* saw some one take a trumpet and step to the rail nearest them. Peter's heart gave a great throb, and he had difficulty in restraining the shout that rose to his lips, when he recognized the speaker as none other than Captain Warner himself.

The command to heave to and wait for a boat to come alongside was distinctly heard on the schooner, and was at once obeyed. To resist would have been worse than useless, or





THE CHASE



we may be well assured the glum-faced captain would have done so, for never yet has it been a characteristic of men of the Anglo-Saxon race to give up when a struggle would promise even the slightest chance of victory.

But what could the heavily laden schooner do against the more active, better equipped and better manned brig? To fight would have been madness, and in a sullen silence the Polly's crew watched the long-boat as it departed from the brig and swiftly approached them.

In a few minutes it was alongside, and the agile men clambered quickly on board. Peter did not recognize one of the boarding party, and restrained his impulse to speak and declare himself, well knowing, now that the schooner had fallen into Captain Warner's hands, that he would be safe, and as soon as the proper time came he would again be free. His feeling of exaltation, however, could not be concealed, and was in strange contrast to the disconsolate appearance of the crew of which for a few hours he had been an unwilling member.

A conversation between the glum captain of the schooner and the leader of the boarding party now followed; but though they

were eagerly watched by all on board, not a word could be heard by Peter or the sailors. After a brief time the leader seized his trumpet, and advancing to the rail called for Captain Warner to come on board.

That worthy officer quickly responded, and as he stepped on deck the first person upon whom his glance fell was Peter Van Mater. The lad was about to rush forward and explain the meaning of his presence on the English schooner, but the little captain sternly bade him be silent until such a time as he should bid him speak. Abashed Peter fell back, though his interest in the events which followed was in no wise diminished.

"We've struck it rich this time, captain," he heard the man who had led the boarding party declare to his commanding officer. "She's the Polly, from Charleston, bound for London, and with a cargo that will make your eyes water."

"Say you so?" replied Captain Warner, as calmly as if the taking of a rich prize was a matter of every-day occurrence. "There are worse days than Friday, then. This has ever been my lucky day."

"Surely this day is lucky, whatever may be said of others," responded his friend, as

together they turned to the captain of the captured schooner and with him went below to his cabin.

Only a few minutes had passed when the men returned to the deck, and it became evident what disposition was to be made of the prize. The captured men were at once shut in the hold, and a prize crew from the *Betsy* was sent on board to take the schooner to Boston, the safest port at the time on the entire Atlantic seaboard.

It was only when all these details had been arranged that the sturdy little captain stopped for a moment before Peter and said, "What say you, lad? Will you go to Boston with the prize, or will you swing your hammock in the *Betsy*? By the way, how came you here anyway?"

Peter briefly related the story of what had befallen him since the departure of his companion in the preceding night, and then said, "Captain Warner, I would neither go to Boston nor ship aboard the *Betsy*. You know why I must remain on shore as well as I."

"True, lad, though I had hoped you would see the error of your ways and join the *Betsy's* crew. 'Tis not often a man refuses an invitation like that. But get you aboard

of her now, and we'll send the Polly to the place where she shall find all the crackers, yes, and brown bread, too, that she desires. We must bestir ourselves too," he added, as a low rumble was heard in the distance.

The heavy thunder-heads could be clearly seen, and the lightning as it flashed across the water served to emphasize the captain's words. The attention of all was suddenly called away from the storm, however, by the man at the masthead as he shouted : —

“ A sail on the larboard bow ! ”



## CHAPTER IX

### AN IMPATIENT PATIENT

THE perplexity of poor Garrett, when he discovered the sad state of affairs in the household where he had so frequently received the tokens of their friendly care, was naturally great. He had, however, no words of comfort to offer, and his silence only seemed to deepen the confusion which possessed him.

“Garrett, we have fared worse than you, I fear,” said John sadly.

“Was it Blackbeard?” inquired Garrett simply.

“The heart was blacker than the beard. Did you love my father, Garrett? Has my mother ever been good to you?”

“Ay, that she has. For all this score of years Mistress Russell has been ever kind to me. I know not how I should have endured the weary waiting had it not been for her and your father.”

“Would you return the kindness now?”

“I would that in any way in my power, that is, if Blackbeard does not come back. If he should miss me at the gallows-tree he would think poor Garrett had not been true to his word.”

“But if he should not come, you would be willing to do something for my father, who has done so much for you?”

“Yes,” replied Garrett simply. “Do you know that he will not come?”

“I know he will not within this time of which I am to speak. Now listen, Garrett. Do you know where Toms River is?”

“Yes, I know, though I think that Blackbeard never took me there.”

“Very likely. You can find your way, however, and must go there at once and find Captain Joshua Huddy. He was a good friend to my father, and will be glad to see you because you come for him. Do you think you could remember what I say to you now and repeat it to him?”

“I will try.”

“Then tell Captain Huddy that his friend John Russell wants to see him the first time he comes up the country. We’re in trouble here, and Captain Joshua will be able to aid us. Can you remember that?”

"Yes, Blackbeard has been here and wishes to see Captain Huddy under the gallows-tree. I can remember that well, and I'll tell him too. Still, if Blackbeard should come while I am gone" —

"John," said Hester quickly in a low voice, "you'll have to write the captain. Poor Garrett will not remember any message you may give him."

"You write then, Hester," said her husband wearily. "I do not feel equal to the task."

Accordingly Hester Russell wrote a brief note, which was intrusted to the messenger, and after a few instructions had been given him as to the place he was to seek and the man he was to find, Garrett was sent forth on his errand.

So it came to pass that at almost the same time two messengers, journeying in opposite direction, departed from the Russell home. One was the black slave Moses with a word for Captain Walton, and the other was Crazy Garrett on his way to the little fort at Toms River.

Moses started forth with a zeal that promised well. He previously had been somewhat influenced by some of his black com-

panions who had left their masters to find their freedom, but somehow the result had not been equal to his anticipations. The three or four days he had passed in the Tory band had been busy ones, and as far as labor was concerned he had done more than he had been compelled to do by his master. Apparently he was at the nod and beck of every one in the camp, and Moses was not long in deciding that if this was what freedom meant then he strongly preferred his former condition of servitude. There at least he had not been ill treated, and he had been sure of a good bed and plenty to eat, two conditions that were both wanting among the Tories.

Against his wishes he had been compelled to lead the way through the woods to the home of his master; but the sad outcome of the visit had been more than he could bear. In the midst of the confusion he had fled from his companions, and as the storm broke had sought a shelter in the house of the Stuckers, which he was aware had been abandoned. When Captain Warner and Peter Van Mater had entered the house in the darkness, terror had seized upon the conscience-smitten Moses, and without waiting to learn

who the visitors were he had darted into the storm with the cry which had so startled the new occupants of the deserted house.

Once free, Moses' feet had borne him swiftly to the home of his master, where his arrival and the labors upon which he at once entered have already been recorded. And now the returned slave was engaged in a new service for "Massa John." It would require several days to make the journey to and from the camp where Captain Walton's troops were stationed; but he had been over the ground several times already in the company of Sergeant John, and was therefore familiar with every foot of the journey. He also knew many of the people, both whites and blacks, who dwelt along his route, and consequently had no fears as to the provision he would require on the way. Indeed, the first night, when he stopped at a farmhouse, he found himself quite a marked man among his sable friends. He had not been backward in declaring that he was bound for the camp of the Continentals, and the bravery implied in the task at once placed him high in the estimation of the slaves.

On the following morning, when he resumed his journey, his spirits had risen in a marked

degree. He had slight fear now of meeting any of the Tories, who might not understand the sudden change in his sentiments, his pockets were well filled with good things which his friends had provided, and above all the interest he felt in the visit he was about to make to the camp served to cheer his heart; and as he journeyed he made the woods resound with the weird songs of which the negroes were so fond.

The object of his journey was at last completed, the visit to the camp was made, and the letter delivered by his own hands to Captain Walton. The captain had written a reply, and had also bidden Moses express his sympathy to the Russells and tell the sergeant that at his first opportunity he would come to see him. No time for this visit could be definitely fixed; but Moses was to assure his master that Captain Walton would come without fail, and that he would gladly join with him in bringing the Tories, or outlaws, as they might more properly be called, to justice.

With many expressions of delight at what he had seen in the camp and the certainty of his repeating the message exactly as he had received it, Moses had set forth on his homeward way. There was an evident re-



luctance on his part to depart, for the camp life seemed to present many attractions to the black man. The uniforms of the men, the drums and fifes, the freedom of the place, the presence of a number of his own dusky friends, all appealed strongly to him. However, he at last departed, resolved in his heart that when Massa John returned he too would accompany the sergeant and share in what he was pleased to call the easy life of the Jersey Blues.

About half of his homeward journey had been accomplished, and Moses had not been gone more than an hour from the little cabin in which he had passed the preceding night, when he found himself on a lonely road that led through a long stretch of the forest. To cheer his heart he was singing in tones that might have been heard far away, but he suddenly stopped when directly in the road before him he discovered none other than Philip White approaching.

The impulse to turn and dart into the woods came too late, and before the startled Moses could recover from his surprise and alarm, the Tory was close to him. The fact that White apparently was alone did not serve to restore the slave's composure, and his mani-

fest terror if nothing else would have caused the man to stop him.

"Why, Moses," exclaimed White, "I did n't expect to find you in this part of the country. Where d' ye come from?"

"Yas sah! Yas sah! No sah! Yas sah!" replied Moses incoherently.

White watched him shrewdly for a moment in silence and then said, with a twinkle in his eyes, "It's a great thing to be free, is n't it, Moses?"

"Yas sah! Yas sah!"

"'Tis n't much like being ordered around by white folks, is it?"

"No sah! No sah!"

"Well, I'm glad to see you here, Moses, anyway. You could n't have pleased me better if I had sent for you. You aren't going to any special place just now, I take it?" As Moses made no reply, White said, "Then turn about and come along with me. There's lots of freedom where I am going, and I'll see that you have your full share."

Reluctant as Moses was to go with the man he was too badly frightened to refuse, and so it came to pass that neither the messenger nor the message came to relieve the anxious heart of Sergeant John Russell.

Meanwhile the other messenger whom John had dispatched to Captain Huddy at Toms River had not fared much better, for though Garrett had held steadily to his way, he discovered when he arrived at the fort that the letter which had been intrusted to him had been lost. Consequently when he stood before the captain he could only give a confused story, in which Blackbeard and John Russell and King John were so mixed that even Captain Huddy was unable to learn what purpose poor Garrett had had in coming to Toms River, if indeed he had had any purpose at all. Garrett had then lingered for a few days about the post, for the most part treated kindly by the garrison, many of whom well knew him; and when at last he departed it was not to return to John Russell with the message Captain Huddy would gladly have sent, if he had only known what the sergeant had so much desired to inform him about.

During these days no marked change had appeared in the Russell household. King John was doing as well as might be expected, while it had become apparent that his father's wound, though it would require many weeks to heal, was not likely, with good care, to endanger his life, and "good care" was exactly what Hester prided herself upon.

As the days passed into weeks, and neither of the messengers returned and no word came from either of the captains, the restlessness of the wounded sergeant increased. Every morning he stationed a servant at a place in the road from which an approaching man could be seen while he was yet far away ; but no one had come, and the suspense was unbroken. Hester was becoming desperate in her efforts to restrain her impatient husband, and was in constant fear now that he would do something which would retard his progress toward recovery.

It was, therefore, with a feeling of delight that, one morning several weeks after the attack had been made, she spied some one approaching on horseback ; and when the stranger rode up to the horse-block and she recognized the visitor as Captain Huddy himself, she rushed forth to greet him in a manner that warmed the heart of that doughty leader.

“ I heard of your sorrow,” he said at last, when her greeting had been given, “ and came as soon as possible to learn what I could do to assist you.”

“ Yes, we sent Garrett to you soon after ” —

“Garrett? Did you send Garrett?” interrupted the captain.

“Yes. Did you not receive the letter we gave him for you?”

“I had no letter. I recollect now that he was in the camp several weeks ago, but he gave me no letter. He had his usual story of Blackbeard, and I believe he did refer to you, now that I come to think of it, but I never place any dependence upon what he says. He’s in the camp and out again, no one knows when or why.”

Captain Huddy spoke truly when he said he did not trust poor Garrett’s words, and in this he was not unlike the other people of the region; and yet the tragedy which not long afterwards was enacted in Old Monmouth might have been averted had this very leader only heeded the words of the demented man, who, Cassandra-like, was destined to speak the truth but to have his words ever misbelieved.

Hester Russell briefly related the story of the attack and the events which had followed, and then said, “Come into the house, Captain Huddy. My husband is more eager to see you than to see his own wife, I suspect.”

As the captain turned to follow her after hitching his horse to the post, he suddenly

stopped, and, pointing up the road along which he himself had come, said, "What have we here? Who is this latest arrival?"

Hester followed his look and saw another man on horseback swiftly approaching.

In a few minutes he too had ridden up in front of the house, and as he dismounted his own surprise seemed to be as great as that of Captain Huddy at the unexpected meeting.



## CHAPTER X

### A CONFERENCE

CAPTAIN WALTON, Sergeant John's commander, for so the latest arrival proved to be, advanced with outstretched hand to greet his old-time friend Captain Huddy. He was a man in middle life, active and energetic, and spoke in a quick, somewhat disconnected manner, in striking contrast to the more dignified form which Captain Huddy used.

"Glad to see you, Josh Huddy," exclaimed Captain Walton. "Where d'ye come from? How's the fort at Toms River? Any news from the seat of war? And how's my soldier boy's wife?" he added, without giving his friend an opportunity to reply to his rapid questions.

"I am well, I thank you," replied Hester. "My husband will be pleased to see you."

"Ah, yes. No doubt, no doubt. How is the lad? You have had a sad time of it here, if common report is to be believed. I trust the rumors have been exaggerated. And how

are King John and the other members of the family? All well, I'm hoping."

"We are all doing much better than I feared," replied Hester quietly. "We have been looking for you, or at least a word from you, for a long time. Did you receive the missive my husband sent you?"

"You mean the letter the black rascal brought me? Oh, yes, I received that, and doubtless you had my reply?"

"We have had no reply."

"No reply? That's strange, for I sent one by the black."

"He has not been here."

"Not been here? You don't say so! Well, I sent him out of my camp and told him to bring you my message. What do you suppose has befallen him? He may have met with foul play."

Hester Russell made no reply, not feeling called upon to express any lurking suspicion she may have had of Moses. Her silence, however, passed unnoticed by the loquacious officer, who at once turned to Captain Huddy and said, "How now, Captain Josh? Why are you so silent? You have not once opened your mouth."

"Nor have you once closed yours," said Captain Huddy drily.

“Ha, ha ! Still the same old Josh Huddy, I see. You were cut out for a camp meeting preacher. I vow no one would suspect that you were a captain of the Monmouth militia, to see you. You take life too seriously by far. Things are bad enough without trying to make them worse. Look on the bright side, that’s my motto every day in the year.”

“Things are bad and likely to be worse before they are better,” replied Captain Huddy solemnly.

No two men in Jersey could be more unlike than these two friends, for fast friends they had been for years. Joshua Huddy, with a frame as sturdy as his soul, was one who never took life lightly. In whatever cause he enlisted he entered with might, mind, and strength. He had been in the New Jersey militia under General Maxwell at the time of the great battle of Monmouth, and after that engagement had remained to serve in the local militia. No man in the old county was more thoroughly trusted or deeply respected by the patriots of the region, and it is safe to say none was more fully hated or feared by the Tories. Already one desperate attempt to capture him had been made,<sup>1</sup> and the bold

<sup>1</sup> *A Jersey Boy in the Revolution.*

manner in which he had defended himself and at last escaped from his would-be captors had served to increase the determination of the enemy to rid the land of one who had so successfully outwitted them.

In spite of the apparent difference between his disposition and that of Captain Walton the two men were fast friends ; and none knew better than Captain Huddy that his comrade was one to be relied upon implicitly, in spite of his apparently light and flippant manner.

"Tell me how my soldier boy is," said Captain Walton, turning again to Hester as he spoke.

"'T will be better for you to come in and see for yourself," she replied. "And do you come too, Captain Huddy. Your visit will do him more good than all my medicines."

Thus bidden, Captain Walton tied his horse to a tree, glanced keenly about the place to assure himself that no enemy was within sight, and then followed his friend and Hester as they led the way to the room in which Sergeant John was confined.

As they entered, Captain Walton rushed toward the bed with his hand held forth and exclaimed, "How now, my lad? You look as if you were fit to chase the redcoats into the

Navesink. This is a great way in which to obtain a furlough. I have a suspicion that these bright eyes have had something to do with your absence from the camp," and as he spoke he turned laughingly to Hester, who was standing there.

John's face flushed, and instantly perceiving the effect of his words, Captain Walton hastened to say, "Forgive me, lad; for the moment I had forgotten your sorrow. Believe me, every one in the troop shares with you this loss and is as determined as yourself to bring the rascals to justice."

In response to John's welcome and his inquiry as to how it had happened that both men had come to visit him on the same day, it was explained that it was a mere coincidence.

Captain Huddy had, as we know, received no direct message, and had come at his earliest opportunity to express his sympathy and offer his services. Captain Walton had sent word by Moses, a word which had not been received, that he would leave the camp as soon as certain duties had been performed, and confer with his favorite sergeant concerning the things which were next to be done. It was only by chance that both had selected

the same day, but their coming at the same time was a source of great pleasure to the wounded man, and gave him the opportunity he most desired of conferring with them both.

"We miss you in the camp, John," said Captain Walton kindly; "and it is a time when the absence of every good man counts double."

"Is there anything wrong?" inquired John quickly. He was still lying by the side of "King John" upon the bed, neither of them being able as yet to walk about the room.

Captain Walton's expressive face clouded for a moment, and then he said quietly, "No, nothing serious has occurred, unless the signs be taken in that manner. Of course it is not difficult for a man with eyes in his head to know what it means when he sees the thunder-heads creeping up the sky and sees a flash of lightning in the clouds, though he may not have felt a drop of rain on his face."

"Why don't you explain yourself?" demanded Captain Huddy sharply. "You talk enough. Why don't you say something with all your words?"

"Still the same old serious Josh," said Captain Walton good-naturedly. "I don't



believe you could ever see a joke, — now could you, Josh ?”

“I see no joke in what you have been saying. You speak as if you were afraid of trouble in your camp. Is that what you mean ?”

“It is and it is n’t. The case is just like this. The main trouble is in the Pennsylvania line. You see, when they first enlisted, the recruiting officers were provided with enlisting rolls for the term of three years, or ‘*during the continuance of the war,*’ and as most of our officers had no thought that the war would continue for more than three years at the longest, they did n’t much care in which column the soldier’s name was inserted. That is what is making a part of the trouble, for now some of the men claim that they enlisted only for a term of three years, and that the limit has expired. Now that the war goes on with no prospect of an end in sight, of course the officers know how much more valuable the men are who have had the experience of three years than raw recruits would be, and so they are doing everything in their power to keep the veterans in line.”

“And right they are, too !” interrupted Captain Huddy.

“Oh, they’re right enough, but then we mustn’t forget the other side. The men practically have n’t had any pay for a twelve-month, they are almost naked, and perhaps not far from the border of famine. It’s pretty hard for a man to be patriotic, especially when the country is n’t fairly born yet, and have to put up with all those hardships. But that is n’t the worst. The men could bear it if that was all there was to it, but you see, when they think of their wives and babies as starving and unprotected in their homes, when rascals like those who have visited this house are abroad in the land, that’s what makes it harder still. A man can suffer himself and not complain, but when it comes to having his little ones starve, it’s almost too much to expect human nature to bear it.”

In spite of his apparently thoughtless manner Captain Walton’s eyes were filled with tears and his voice was strangely soft as he spoke. Captain Huddy, grim and hard, however, had little patience with such softness, and was at no pains to conceal his contempt.

“I thought better of the Pennsylvania men than that!” he said sharply. “They’ve given such a good account of themselves up to this time in every fight they’ve been in, that

I can't understand this that you say now. Hard? Of course it's hard! We didn't go into the war expecting it to be an easy one, did we? And just because it is hard is the very reason why every one ought to stand up and face his duty as a man should. I've no patience with any man who flinches when the pinch comes."

"We all know you don't, Josh," said Captain Walton softly. "If all were like you there wouldn't be any need of leaders in this war. It's just because there are so few that we're threatened with the danger of the men deserting. It's in times like this, though, that such men as Washington (God bless him!) and Greene and Wayne and the rest of them shine as they do. Any one can do, when it doesn't cost him much; but the real test of a man is what he does when his work is hard and everything seems to be going against him. And most men are not great, you must not forget that."

"No, I'll not forget it; but I've got a band down here at Toms River that are no feather-bed soldiers, I can tell you. They've gone into this struggle not because they wanted to, but because it was right."

"They have a leader who sets them a good example."

“They’ve a leader who has n’t gone into this as if it was a party down the bay duck-shooting, anyway.”

“But, Captain Walton,” interrupted John, “all this trouble is among the Pennsylvania troops. I don’t see how it affects you, for you have none but Jersey men in your forces.”

“It’s like small-pox ; it spreads,” replied Captain Walton, “and some of our men are beginning to be restless. I’m sorry for it and for them, for I know General Washington well enough to be satisfied that he will make short work with the leaders. And then too I understand that Sir Henry Clinton is already counting upon the disaffection among our forces as one of the strongest aids he has. It’s a sad state, and that’s why I miss you so much in camp, John. Every true man counts for twice as much now as ever before.”

“I only wish I was there,” groaned the young sergeant.

“But you’re not, and not likely to be soon,” quickly responded Captain Walton ; “and besides, I’m of the opinion that you are needed here. If you can only bring these rascals to justice you’ll free Old Monmouth from a great burden, and then you’ll be all the better to go back to the army. Now let

us talk of the plan of the campaign against the Tories.”

For three hours the men conversed, talking over all the details, and when at last the two captains departed, it had been agreed that for the present no men should be sent to aid John in his efforts. He was himself, as soon as his strength returned, to try to learn the habits and hiding-places of the band which had attacked his father's house, and as soon as these had been discovered, he was to report to both men what he had learned, and the further actions would then be decided upon.

Not more than an hour after their departure Hester entered John's room, betraying in her manner the excitement under which she was laboring.

“John, what do you think?” she said. “Moses has come back. He's downstairs in the kitchen. What shall I do with him?”

“Send him upstairs to me at once!” said her husband eagerly; and a few moments afterwards Moses entered the room, glancing furtively about him and slowly approaching the bed in response to the demand of the sergeant.

## CHAPTER XI

### GAIN AND LOSS

THE cry of the sailor aloft instantly drew the eyes of all to the sail which could easily be seen in the distance, and the elation in the heart of Peter Van Mater, keen as it was over his release, was even more marked than that of his companions. For the time, thoughts of his own problems were ignored when it was discovered that the vessel was also a small schooner, evidently headed for New York.

The course of the stranger, however, was speedily changed, for she herself had just sighted the Betsy, and though she was unable to make out just who or what she was, it was not deemed expedient to incur many risks; and so she was now running before the storm, a procedure which brought a grim smile upon the face of the little Yankee captain.

As the schooner which had already been taken was now manned with a prize crew, Captain Warner felt free to follow the vessel



just sighted, and accordingly the brig started in swift pursuit. In spite of the fact that the threatening storm now broke upon them, only a few of the sails were taken in, and the Betsy tore through the water at a speed which few skippers would have dared to make.

The darkness had steadily deepened, while the crashes of thunder and the flashes of lightning were almost incessant. The rain was falling in torrents, but not one of the Betsy's crew heeded the wetting he received. Only by the flashes of lightning was the whereabouts of the schooner revealed, but the pitching, tossing Betsy bore steadily down in the direction in which she was supposed to be.

The men on the privateer were now prepared for action. The matches were lighted, the lanterns were burning fore and aft, and every one was anxiously awaiting the commands of the bold little captain. It was the first experience of the kind Peter had ever had, and his excitement was intense. His tall form was conspicuous in every blaze of light, but his pale face was hidden by the darkness before any one was able to perceive how his hands were trembling. It was a comfort, however, to know that Captain Warner was near

him on the deck, and that in spite of his apparent recklessness he not only understood the work which was demanded of him, but that all his men had implicit confidence in their commander.

A prolonged flash revealed the nearby presence of the schooner, and grasping his trumpet, and in a voice not unlike the sound of the trumpet itself, Captain Warner shouted,

“What ship is that and where from?”

“The schooner Jolly Boy, bound for New York,” came back the reply between the reports of thunder. The glare, however, had enabled the crew of the Betsy to perceive the colors of the other boat, and they knew at once that they were English. At the same time the crew of the schooner had seen the American colors of the Betsy, and were aware that they were almost if not entirely in the power of their enemy.

Captain Warner instantly gave the command for one shot to be fired, and then shouted through his trumpet, —

“Haul down your colors, or I’ll blow you out of the water.”

The appearance of the Betsy was too formidable to permit of ignoring the command, and instantly Captain Warner’s demand was

complied with. In spite of the storm a prize master and crew were put on board, and then all waited for the clouds to pass.

It was not long before the heavy peals of thunder faded into low and distant mutterings, the lightning became less vivid and the clouds soon passed. Captain Warner received word that the schooner was loaded with bread and cheese for the British forces in New York, and a goodly part of her cargo was speedily transferred to the *Betsy*. He then held a consultation with his officers as to the best course to pursue.

It was agreed by all that it would not be prudent to remain cruising any longer off the Jersey shore, for it was known that several British frigates were in the neighborhood, and their room was decidedly better than their company. The result of the conference was that both of the schooners were signaled to approach; one was taken in tow and the other was ordered to keep close behind, and with a fair wind all three set sail for Boston.

Great was the elation on board the *Betsy*. As the evening sun sank in the western sky it seemed to paint in gorgeous colors the visions of prize money which would be divided when the vessels arrived in Boston town.

Even Captain Warner was as enthusiastic as his men, and several times in the course of the evening he stopped by Peter's side and congratulated him upon being on board at a time which meant so much to them all. And Peter responded eagerly, for his young heart had been deeply stirred by the success of the *Betsy*, and for the time he was almost ready to forget the demands of home and cast in his lot with such a daring and successful privateer as Captain Warner had shown himself to be. The peaceful stars appeared in the sky and almost seemed to share in the delight of the *Betsy's* men, the wind held fair, and all things promised well for the bold skipper and his crew. Not a friend or foe was discovered on the ocean throughout the night.

At sunrise, however, there came a change as unwelcome as it was unexpected. Peter had just appeared on deck when he was startled by the cry of the man at the mast-head, —

“Two sail to the leeward.”

Apparently ignoring the effect of the shout among his men, Captain Warner instantly took his glass and ascended to the maintop. His men stood on the deck watching him, every man anxious and vainly looking into

his neighbor's face for an expression of hope which he himself was far from feeling.

The tension was not long continued, for the captain speedily returned to the deck, and facing his anxious men, said calmly, —

“They are two frigates, close-hauled, and I have no doubt in full chase of us.”

Instantly his manner changed, and in his sharpest tones he gave orders for the schooner which the *Betsy* had in tow to be cast off and make her way as best she could for Boston. The yards of the *Betsy* were then braced, and all the sail she could carry was crowded on, and everything done by officers and men to escape from the two white-winged vessels which could be seen far behind.

Disappointed as Peter was, he nevertheless entered into the labors of the men and did all in his power to add to the force, which now was somewhat shortened owing to the absence of the prize crews which had been placed on board the captured schooners. The determination of all was no less marked than it had been in the preceding afternoon, but the anxiety could not be concealed. Every one was continually glancing at the distant sails, and the apprehension of all on board the privateer was only too apparent.

When the noontime came and it was evident that the Betsy was holding her own in the race, a brief return of hope came to the men. If the wind would only hold fair until the darkness came she might be able to throw off her pursuers and elude them in the night. There was even a chance that she might distance them, and make her way into some friendly harbor where she might lie until all danger was passed.

But the faint hope was dashed when soon after noon the wind shifted, and it was readily seen that the pursuing frigates had fallen into the wake of the Betsy; and before an hour had elapsed it was apparent to all that they were gaining upon her. Still the men worked desperately, and Captain Warner seemed to be everywhere at once. He labored with his crew, and his spirit of determination was evidently contagious. Seldom did any one speak, but the expressive glances which were every moment cast at the approaching frigates required no interpreter. Every man understood just how his mate felt, and the silence was far more expressive than speech would have been.

It was about two o'clock when a change came. Captain Warner summoned the men



aft, and as he faced the anxious assembly his own anxiety was apparent to every man.

"We are in dire straits, men; I have no need to tell you that," he began. "Together we have sailed this brig now nigh onto a twelvemonth, and we have made her give a good account of herself too, as many a prize ship could declare. It may be that our time to receive what we have so often given has come, and if it has, why it has, and that's all there is to it."

He paused for a moment, but no one responded. There was a settled air of gloom over all, and when the captain felt as he evidently did, there was not much to be said by his men.

"Those frigates are carrying the French flag," he resumed, "but that trick does n't fool us, for we've played it too often ourselves to be taken in by it now. They are English frigates, I make no doubt," and as he spoke he lifted his glass and again looked long and steadily at his pursuers. "It is as I have just said," he continued, as he lowered his glass, "for at this very minute they have hauled down the French colors and run up the English. We now know what we have to meet, and must meet it like men."

A low murmur arose from his hearers at the words, and more than one looked back at the frigates with an anxiety even more apparent than before.

"I have n't summoned you aft to tell you what you know already," Captain Warner resumed quickly. "I've another matter to speak of. Some of you may remember that not very long ago we fell in with a Yankee brig from Havana, bound for Boston. Yes, I see you have n't forgotten," he added, as the men nodded in reply. "Well, Captain Cunningham was in command of her, and he had on board a lot of specie."

In spite of their fears the men all glanced keenly up at the captain's reference to money, an action which brought a smile upon the face of the resolute little commander.

"Captain Cunningham was afraid he'd never get into port with that money, so, as he believed in the Betsy more than he did in his own brig, he put it all aboard of her, and it's here now. I don't believe there's a man here would want that money to fall into the hands of our enemies if he could prevent it, so I'm going to ask you to help me take care of it."

A cheer rose from the crew at the words, but the captain raised his hand in token of

silence, and then continued: "I'm going to give every man here fifteen dollars of that money. If we get away from these frigates you are all to give it back to me, and I'll restore it to its rightful owner. One thing more," he added quickly. "We've a goodly store of crackers and cheese on board. I think it would be wise to keep a part of that here; so after you have received the money, you can fill up on the cheese, and that much at least will be kept out of our enemy's hands, if it does n't do us much good."

The money was then brought forth and speedily divided, fifteen dollars being assigned each man, which he carefully concealed upon his person. As soon as this had been done the crew made a rush for the storeroom, where an attack upon the captured stores of the schooner was successfully made, not even the fear of the greater attack, which was likely to be made upon themselves soon, being sufficient to restrain the hungry sailors.

Peter had gone with the men, but as he speedily returned to the deck he was surprised to have Captain Warner say to him, "Come to my cabin at once."

Peter followed obediently, and as soon as he had entered, the captain said, "My boy, there's

too much money to give fifteen dollars to each man. To a few whom I can trust, I have committed more. Put the coin you already have in your hat and take off your shoes."

Peter wonderingly obeyed, and his surprise was increased when he saw the captain pry apart the soles of his shoes and slip a number of coins into the place before he restored them. Then the lad was told to go on deck, but thoughts of his possessions were speedily forgotten in the sight he beheld when he was once more with the crew of the *Betsy*.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE SEARCH

THE two ships had almost overtaken the unfortunate privateer, and now were both recognized by the men. One was the *Roe Buck*, a forty-gun ship, with a double deck, and the other was the *May Day*, of twenty-eight guns.

It was afterwards learned that the two vessels had been on the lookout for the *Betsy* for nearly four weeks, having received word of her presence from some of the Tories along the Jersey shore as well as from others in Boston, whither she was accustomed to run with her prizes. The fact of the long-continued search explained in part the brutal treatment the prisoners received, for baffled rage is not wont to cool of itself, or so Captain Warner declared.

The *Roe Buck* soon took her station on the larboard quarter of the *Betsy*, while the *May Day* was off the larboard bow, from which position she sent an eighteen-pound shot over the quarter-deck of the brig. To ignore such

a hail would be madness. What could the trim little privateer do against such fearful odds? Willing as Captain Warner was to struggle for his rights, he was too humane a man to permit his crew to sacrifice themselves in what was certain to be a hopeless contest.

Ignoring the protests of his men, and apparently not heeding their murmurings, he stood by the rail watching his enemies and waiting for the hail which he soon expected to hear. He had not long to wait, for across the water came the demand for the Betsy to strike her colors. As the demand was accompanied by a threat to send a broadside if this was not instantly complied with, Captain Warner turned and in a low voice gave the required order. In a brief time the flag of thirteen stars and stripes came fluttering from its place. Peter's tall form enabled him to look over the heads of his companions, and he was not ashamed to see tears in the eyes of many of the men. Indeed, he felt that only a strong effort of his own will would prevent him from sobbing, and as it was, there seemed to be a strange mist on the water between the Betsy and her captors. It was a sad and unfortunate ending of what had promised to be a most successful cruise.



The boats of the enemy were now quickly manned and sent alongside the *Betsy*, whose men had already been permitted by their officers to collect their clothing and the few possessions which were theirs and secure them as best they might be able. By the time this had been accomplished the boats were alongside and the nimble British sailors were ascending the deck.

Their rage seemed to know no bounds, and woe betide the luckless Yankee sailor whom they happened to fall upon. Blows and kicks were plentifully mingled with the epithets they bestowed upon the prisoners as they rushed to search in every part of the brig for something of value. As soon as a hasty search had been made the prisoners were ordered to pass down the side of the ship into the enemy's boats, but were all forbidden to carry anything with them.

A few of the unfortunate men, however, as it was becoming dark by this time, ventured to fasten their bedding upon their backs, a precaution which Peter many times afterward wished that he himself had taken. Some of these men so laden threw themselves headforemost into the waiting boats, and in the dim light crept into the cuddy with their pos-

sessions, trusting to some future opportunity to hide or use that which they had brought with them.

As soon as the boats were filled they were rowed alongside the *Roe Buck*, and the prisoners made their way to the quarter-deck amidst the jeers and abuse of their captors. When all the men had been transferred and stood together, almost as hopeless and miserable a lot as ever the eye of man beheld, the captain of the *Roe Buck* stepped forward and began to speak.

“The first thing you rebels will do will be to hand over that fifteen dollars. I know you have it, for there’s one true Briton in your miserable crew, as I happen to know. Turn it over, for it’ll save time and a heap of trouble. You’ve the money about you, for this man told me that every one of you had the same amount as his fellows.”

There was a silence deep and intense which followed the demand. In the dusk the unfortunate men looked at one another as if they did not know just what to do. Not one, however, had responded to the demand, and in a voice which betrayed his anger, and which we may be sure did not tend to allay the fears of the prisoners, the captain ordered

the sergeant-at-arms to come forward and search every one till the sum of fifteen dollars had been found on each sailor, or "rebels," as the irate officer termed them.

The sergeant-at-arms eagerly obeyed, but to search was one thing and to find was a very different matter. Some of the men had so effectually concealed the coin they had received that it was found only after a long-continued effort. All this did not help the prisoners, and doubtless it would have been the part of wisdom to quietly give up their possessions; but there was the same kind of blood in the veins of captors and prisoners, and the determination of one was as great as that of the other.

Peter had stood quietly in the place he had first taken, and was watching the search with an interest as intense as any on board. He had seen man after man roughly handled, the money found upon his person, and then the victim sent with a kick or a blow to the hold to join those who had gone before.

It was now the turn of the man who was standing next to him to be searched, and at the word of the sergeant-at-arms he advanced and took his stand.

"Give up the coin," demanded the officer

roughly, "and save yourself and me the trouble of searching you. 'T will be better."

"If you think I've any money about me," drawled the sailor, with apparent unconcern, "you'll be the first one. I never yet was known to have so much as a York shilling."

The reply of the sergeant-at-arms was to grasp him roughly by the shoulder and call upon two of his men to search the prisoner. In spite of all their efforts the search proved unavailing, and at last, satisfied that he must have spoken truly, he was dismissed with a kick that lifted him from the deck and sent him sprawling toward the hold, into which he hastily entered and joined his miserable companions.

"Now, man, profit by your friend's example," demanded the sergeant-at-arms of Peter, whose turn to be searched had come.

Peter stepped forward, but made no reply.

"How now?" said the searcher roughly. "We'll have to string these rebels up at the yardarms to make them disgorge. Hand over your coin, man!"

Still Peter was silent, and with a rage he was at no pains to conceal, the officer seized the lad by the collar and began to shake him. For a moment it seemed to Peter that the sky

and twinkling stars, the tall masts and the waves, the men and the guns, were all thrown strangely together. Shaken he was until it seemed to him that his very joints must snap. The patience of the searchers, if ever they had possessed such a quality, had been long since exhausted by what they were pleased to call the "obstinacy of the rebels." Peter would be thrown to the deck, but before he fairly touched the planks he would find himself in the air with no support beneath him. Up and down and back and forth he was thrown until at last his hat fell off, and with the fall the coins which he had concealed in it also fell to the deck with a clatter that brought him instant release, as the men quickly began to grope for the money.

When this had been found and counted, it was perceived that the sum for which each prisoner was supposed to be accountable was there, and Peter was dismissed to join his comrades in the hold.

"Did they get your money?" inquired a man over whom he stumbled.

"They yanked fifteen dollars out of my hat," replied Peter gloomily, not thinking it necessary or wise to explain that he still had as much more concealed in his shoes. He

had recognized the voice as that of the man who had been searched just before him, and in the dim light could now perceive that his ears had not deceived him.

“They did n’t get all of mine,” replied the man cheerily. “I say, boy, let’s be chums. My name is Simon Harbottle. What’s yours?”

“Peter Van Mater.”

“Good name. I liked your looks when we were both on earth, — I mean on deck, — and as long as I’ve a shilling left I’ll share it with you.”

“You’re good to me,” said Peter, glad to have even the friendship of a stranger. The generosity of his new friend troubled him, and he was about to explain that he too had succeeded in retaining a part of the sum which had been intrusted to him, when their conversation was interrupted by the entrance of two men who apparently had been thrown bodily into the hold. Their coming was not provocative of the welcome which perhaps they deserved, for it called forth a series of protests and blows from those upon whom they had fallen, and for a time it sounded more like a snarling pack of dogs or wolves than a band of men who had recently been friends and



comrades in arms. However, quiet was at last restored, and as the newcomers were the last of the sailors to be searched, the hatches were closed and the prisoners were shut in for the night.

The few who had succeeded in retaining their bedding were now the envied of all. In the hold itself there was nothing to lie upon softer than the ship's ballast, which consisted of stones of various sizes, though of uniform hardness, with here and there a lump of pig iron to afford a slight variation. There were also a few water-barrels, upon which some of the men tried to rest, but as the barrels had a manner of rolling apart and depositing their burdens between them, and then rolling back with the next lurch of the ship into their former position, the unfortunate men who were thus caught were prisoners in a dual sense.

"That you, Peter?" called Simon in a low voice, and touching the lad with his hand.

"Yes," replied Peter, returning the pressure.

"Good; now I've got a blanket, and half of it is yours. Creep up close to me. If we're to be chums we might as well begin now."

"You're kind to me," said Peter, eagerly accepting the offer.

The position was only a little less uncomfortable than before, but the long night at length passed, and with the coming of the morning it was apparent that the ship was no longer in motion. Where it had come to anchor no one had the means of knowing until they were summoned to appear on deck, which occurred soon after. There could then be no mistaking the nearby shore, and Peter knew they had returned to Sandy Hook.

A breakfast, which though scanty was the last and best of the kind the lad was to see for many a long day, was served, and then the prisoners were compelled to pass in line before their captors. They had been ordered to the larboard side of the quarter-deck, from which in single file they were marched past the officers on the starboard side, and then some of them were pushed on again to the gangway and once more sent into the hold.

Peter had occasionally been speaking in a low voice to Simon, who was next him in the line, and had been drawn more and more strongly to his newly found friend. Simon was perhaps a little older than he, and his round face beamed, even under the depressing surroundings on board the *Roe Buck*, with good nature that was contagious. His broad

shoulders and short sturdy frame alike proclaimed his great physical strength, and his keen eyes betrayed the fact that he was not one likely to be caught napping.

“They ’re picking out the best men to ship aboard their cruisers,” said Simon, watching the process of selection which was going on before them.

“Then they ’ll want you, I ’m afraid.”

“It ’s one thing to want and another to get. Just keep your eye on me and see what I do with them.”

The line was steadily advancing, and by this time both Peter and his friend were so near the officers that they could look into their faces.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE COMING OF THE PEDDLER

THE fear which possessed Moses was perhaps not unnatural when he perceived that Sergeant John was evidently in no pleasant frame of mind, and somehow the words he had planned to speak failed him. He glanced furtively from the bed to the window as if he was almost minded to attempt to escape from the room, but the stern expression upon his young master's face somehow proved to be stronger than his alarm, and the trembling black man waited uneasily for the sergeant to speak.

For a time John was silent, watching the frightened slave, and perhaps waiting for him to speak and explain his unlooked-for presence; but as Moses did not utter a sound or move from the position he had taken in front of the bed, John at last said, —

“Moses, what is the meaning of this?”

“Yas sah, yas sah. Dat's all right, Massa John. Don' yo' worry a minit. Mose fix yo' all right. An' how is li'l massa?” he added,

peering at King John, who lay motionless beside his father.

“Moses,” said John sternly, “why did n’t you come back here after taking my letter to Captain Walton?”

“Yas sah, yas sah. Mose’ done come back. Is n’t I heah, sah?”

“You are here now, I know, but where have you been? Why did n’t you bring me the letter the captain gave you for me?”

“Massa John, I tell yo’ de truth. Mose done gib dat lettah to de Cap’n, jes’ as yo’ tole him to.”

“Yes, I know you gave him my letter, but why did n’t you bring me his? That’s what I want you to explain to me.”

“Yas sah, yas sah. I done gib de Cap’n de lettah jes’ as I tole yo’. But de Cap’n he berry busy. He done say” —

“Now hold on, Moses. Captain Walton has been here, and he has told me all about it. Don’t you try to lie out of it, or it’ll be the worse for you! I’ve a great mind as it is to help you get your tongue to working!”

John acted as if he was about to leap from the bed, and so failed to note the genuine surprise of the slave at his statement, who evidently was startled by the knowledge that the

captain had visited his master in person, and that consequently all attempts to deceive were likely to avail little. Still Moses was not lacking in shrewdness, and before he committed himself too fully, he was resolved to try to find out just how much the young soldier knew.

“Dat good,” he said glibly. “If Cap’n Walton done been heah, den he tole yo’ Mose gib him de lettah.”

“Yes, he told me that, and he told me also that he gave you a reply to it. Now, Moses, you might just as well tell me the whole thing first as last. Didn’t you know you were watched when you gave that letter up?”

John did not know he was speaking truly, but his suspicions were strong, and he had resolved to put all to the test and be governed by the apparent result.

His ruse succeeded better than he had hoped, for the startled Moses, taken by surprise, blurted forth, “Don’ see how Cap’n Walton know dat. Nobody dere, Massa John, but Phil White. We two was all ’lone in de road dere.”

“You thought you were not seen, and that’s the way it’ll always be with you, Moses. You can’t have anything to do with



those villains without being found out. The first thing I know I'll hear of your woolly topknot hanging from some tree by the roadside, just as many a deserving rascal has been treated in this war. Now, Moses, tell me all about it; and don't you leave out a word either."

John was endeavoring to speak calmly, for he had perceived that he had aroused the fears of the slave, and now he was fearful that he might not be able to learn what he was most eager to discover — the present plans and hiding-places of the Tory band.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Moses uneasily. "Can't fool Massa John, can't do dat for a fac'. Mose tell you de way it was. I was comin' straight home, Massa John, an' I hab de lettah right in my han', so it could n't be lose. Right ober dere by de Stillwagon place, — Massa John know where dat am, I spec."

"Yes, yes, I know. Go on with your story."

"First thing I know I sees a ghostie, least I spec it am a ghostie; but 'fore I could fin' out for sho, dat 'ere ghostie turn out to be Phil White. Yas sah, dat jes' what it do, Massa John, for a fac'. An' Phil White he say ter me, he do, 'yo' jes' han' me dat lettah

what yo' hab in yer han' an' den yo' come 'long.' An' I jes' hab ter go, Massa John, I jes' hab ter."

"And you have been with him ever since, have you?"

"Mose get away fust chance he hab, Massa John," replied the slave uneasily. "Wan' ter come back home mighty bad, Massa John, but Phil White, — he some 'lation to de bad man, I spec, — he jes' won't let me nohow. Yas sah, dat jes' how it am, Massa John."

"Phil White took the letter then, did he?" said John sternly.

"Yas sah, yas sah. Mose hol' on ter dat lettah till he all tare up, Massa John; but no use, Massa John. Phil White he jes' git 'im. Spec Phil White some 'lation ter de bad man — mebbe he brudder. He look like him."

By dint of many questions Sergeant John contrived to learn from Moses that Philip White was not now in the region, but that he had gone to New York along with Lippencott to consult with the recent Tory governor of New Jersey, — William Franklin, — who was then supposed to be at the head of the so-called "Associated Royalists" in the city, and whose plots and plans had resulted in so much suffering for the people of New Jersey,

and especially for the patriots in Old Monmouth and those along the Jersey shore. The fact that William Franklin was the son of Benjamin Franklin, or "Ben," as he was familiarly known by the people, had not served to hold the young man to the cause of the liberty-loving people of the colonies. Indeed, it seemed the rather to make him the more bitter in his feeling. Receiving as he had his appointment through the influence of his illustrious father, it might naturally have been supposed that he too would have shared in his father's patriotism. Virtually made a prisoner soon after the outbreak of the war, at his own request he had been sent first to Connecticut, where he was to be held in confinement, but having been exchanged he had made his way to New York, and there his intimate knowledge of Jersey and of Jersey men had secured for him the position to which reference has been made, a position in which he found ample scope to repay his old scores and make many new ones. Few men were as cordially hated as was he, and strange as it may seem his own anger was most intense against his own father. True was it then as in the early days, that a man's foes frequently proved to be "they of his own household."

For ten long years Doctor Franklin and his son were estranged, and whether the reconciliation which finally took place was genuine, many were even inclined to doubt.

For John Russell to believe that Phil White and Lippencott had gone to New York to consult the famous Tory was not difficult. Indeed, though he had slight confidence in Moses or his narrative, that move on the part of the Tories seemed to him so natural that he concluded at once that it must be true. That they had gone without some strong motive did not seem to him reasonable, and the most likely explanation of that motive was that it must be concerned with something connected with Old Monmouth.

The thought did not tend to soothe the feelings of the sergeant, and on the following day he sent Moses from the house with instructions that he must learn something concerning the movements of the Tories, and must also report to him what he learned at the earliest possible moment.

Moses departed with many expressions of his determination to do as his master had bidden, but perhaps his very vehemence may have produced an effect not unlike that which the great dramatist records as having been

brought about by a certain lord who "protested too much"! At all events the anxiety in John Russell's heart was in no wise relieved by the departure of the black man. By his instructions the bars across the doors and windows of the house were increased, and all precautions against an attack were still maintained.

Meanwhile the slow days passed, the summer had departed, and the restoration of the soldier to health had been slow, much slower than that of little "King John," who was now John the "second" instead of the "third." The lad was once more like himself, and the house resounded with his noisy plays. Sergeant John, however, had only once been able to leave home, and then had only gone to a neighbor's to learn if possible what was going on at the front. The rumors and reports, however, were still very meagre, and John had gone back home not only very weary in body, but with his anxiety in nowise relieved.

Still, it was a source of comfort that the household had not been molested. Moses had not been back, and not even Garrett had once visited the place. The loneliness was almost unendurable, and when one day in the early winter a peddler with his pack approached the house, his coming was hailed with delight.

Not only might some things be purchased of which the family was sadly in need, but also there might be an opportunity to learn something of that great outside world from which the stranger had come and of which he was a part.

Accordingly the peddler received a welcome which would seem strange to us in our day, and before he was permitted to display his wares he was bidden to seat himself before the table, upon which John's wife had placed such things as their scanty store afforded.

The stranger was apparently an old man. His hair was white and his form bent and bowed. It was evident, too, that he was not suffering from hunger, though he had accepted the invitation with apparent eagerness, for he ate but little, and seldom glanced at the food before him.

Too eager to learn of that which was uppermost in his thoughts to give much heed to the negligence of their visitor to appreciate even such viands as only Hester knew how to prepare, John said, —

“A long journey you must have made, stranger, to come to us.”

“Yes.”

“And what hear you of the soldiers?”



"I hear but little ; my trade is not that of arms."

"But you have an interest, as every true man has."

"Nay, no interest have I in such things. I hear you have good cause to wish to follow the movements of certain men."

"You hear truly," replied John, glancing keenly at the man as he spoke. "I would buy out your entire pack, could you but tell me where I might find two men."

"Who might they be?" inquired the stranger indifferently.

"White and Lippencott. Know you of them?"

"Only what men say."

"And what is that?"

"That they are men whom it were well to leave to themselves."

"You have been misinformed," said John quietly ; and rising in apparent carelessness he walked to the corner of the room where his rifle was leaning against the wall. The stranger observed his action, but neither by glance nor word betrayed any interest.

Meanwhile King John was becoming impatient. He was tugging at his mother's dress and begging that the peddler's pack might be

opened so that he might examine the wares contained in it.

At last, to please her boy, Hester said, "I will not take you from your dinner, my good man, but while you are eating I will open your pack and select such things as I desire."

"Nay, not so," replied the peddler quickly, starting to rise from his seat.

"Stay where you are," interrupted John quietly, nevertheless placing his hand upon the gun beside him as he spoke. "You are a bold man, Phil White, as I have already sad cause to know, but you have this day run your head into the jaws of the lion, and shall not draw it forth. I know not why you have come to my home disguised as a peddler unless it be to try to repeat your dastardly work" —

The man looked up impudently, and before John could complete his words placed his fingers in his mouth and whistled shrilly.

## CHAPTER XIV

### A LOST TORY

JOHN RUSSELL, startled by the unexpected action of White, turned sharply at the sound and glanced out of the windows, as if he was expecting to see the followers of the Tory surrounding the house. Quick as his action was, that of White had been quicker, and when John glanced back at him he beheld a huge pistol in the hands of White, and knew at once that he was at his mercy.

Hester had not moved or spoken, apparently having been overwhelmed by the sudden and swift change that had come ; but King John, somehow aware that his father was in danger, suddenly broke from his mother's side, and with a cry ran to his father.

White laughed as he beheld the action, and, confident now that he was in control of the situation, said to John, —

“ You were not expecting a visit from me, I fancy.”

“ No.”

“ And yet if I am correctly informed there is no man in the colonies whom you more sincerely desired to behold. Am I correct, John Russell ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Well, here I am, and still apparently you are not content. 'T is strange how inconsistent some people are. They long with all their hearts for something, but when the very thing they most desire is given them they at once rebel. The little lad there might cry for the moon, but if the moon was given him he would sigh like Alexander for other worlds.”

“ You can talk boldly, Phil White,” said John angrily, “ for you know your gang has surrounded my house, and you have an abundance of helpers. Were you alone the case would be different.”

“ The case is different, and I am alone,” said White drily.

“ What ? ” exclaimed John, starting forward in surprise.

“ It is as I tell you,” said White quietly, nevertheless keeping John within the range of his weapon. “ There is no one with me. It simply was boldness on my part, for I have ever noticed that to him who boldly ventures, the favor almost always falls. Still I am in

no fear, though I have not a friend near me. You will do me no harm, for I can easily prevent that, as you know; and as for this good wife of yours, she has far too good an opinion of her husband to wish any ill to befall him, as certainly would be the case did she but move from the position in which she now is, or cry out for aid." White still spoke in low tones, but there was an evil light in his eyes that was far more threatening than his words.

"Why have you come?" inquired John at last.

"Because I wished to, and for no other reason. I have heard that you were very desirous of seeing me, so I fancied I might save you the trouble of a search by presenting myself before you. Now, John Russell, what will you have of me?"

"You know as well as I," said John bitterly, "what I purposed, but I am in your hands, and there is slight use in words now."

"You speak like a philosopher. I had not looked for such profound wisdom from so young a man. Verily this is a forward age, I might almost say an upstart age, when those who are little more than boys dare to pit themselves against men. Let me give you a piece of advice," he added sternly, his voice

suddenly changing, "and that is for you to leave the Tories, as you call them, to themselves. It will be far better; for by so doing you will not only save your credit, but your home and those who are near and dear to you." As he spoke he glanced at Hester with a look that John could not mistake.

The sergeant's heart sank at the threat, for none knew better than he that it might be no idle word which White was speaking. Still John Russell was no coward, and, summoning all his courage to his aid, he said quickly, "I shall never rest till the murderers of my father are brought to justice."

"That is a harsh word you use, young man," replied the Tory threateningly, "and in war time 'tis not used by those who are engaged in the strife."

"Harsh or not, 't is true, as no one knows better than you, Phil White."

"Be that as it may, we will not quarrel about it now. I have entered your home to see for myself just how you were situated and what you were doing. I now will retire from a place in which I fear my presence is none too welcome; but I will wait until I am outside the house before I restore all the parts of my apparel." As he spoke White took



from the table the wig he had worn, which he had lifted from his head at the beginning of the interview. "There is one thing more before I depart, John Russell," he added.

"What is that?"

"You will not ride or send word to inform the neighbors of my visit here, not for twenty-four hours yet."

"You are indeed well informed," replied John bitterly.

"No better informed than the facts warrant. I have spoken truly, have I not? No word will be sent from this place within the time I have mentioned, I am sure, though I greatly desire your word to confirm what I have said."

As he waited a moment for John to speak, the sergeant said, "You have me in your power, and I must consent. Were we the only ones here, I know, as do you, that never would I agree."

White laughed mockingly, and as he began to back out of the room, still keeping his pistol pointed at John, he said, "My pack is valueless to me, for it is old and contains nothing. So I will leave it for the lad, as he seemed to be interested in it a few moments ago. I may call for it hereafter," he added meaningly.

“There! How could I be so careless! I will trouble you to hand me that gun, which is too near your husband to be safe,” he said to Hester. “I will stand while you secure it for me.”

The Tory was near the doorway now, and Hester, without glancing at her husband’s face, quietly took the rifle and handed it to the man, who grasped it with his left hand, and still holding the pistol in his right at once departed.

As soon as he had gone, John rushed to the window to make sure of the departure of his unwelcome visitor. He could see him as he walked boldly across the cleared space toward the woods beyond, but the sergeant was helpless. His rifle had been taken from him, and he was not yet sufficiently recovered from his illness to dare venture upon a personal encounter with the Tory. His heart was bitter within him, however, and calmly to watch Phil White depart and yet be powerless to stop him was almost more than he could bear.

His thoughts were quickly recalled, however, when, as White approached the woods, John saw a puff of smoke arise from the border, which was instantly followed by the report of a musket, and then a shout went up

that caused Philip White instantly to halt, and turn and run swiftly toward the opposite side of the clearing. There he was saluted by a similar welcome, and at the same time shouts arose from all sides.

White stopped for a moment, glanced quickly about him in every direction, and, concluding that he had been surrounded, made a dash for the barn, into which he quickly entered and disappeared from sight.

With a shout John rushed forth from the house, and at the same time the half dozen blacks who belonged to the household advanced from the woods to greet their master. In a moment it was explained to John that they had become aware of what had been going on inside the house, and had resolved to take their stand in the woods and follow the Tory, who they supposed would take the sergeant with him as his prisoner. Their plans, however, had all been upset by the shot fired by Cæsar, a young slave not more than eighteen years of age, and the result was that White, ~~not~~ knowing anything of his assailants, had betaken himself to the barn in sheer desperation.

John's opportunity had come. With the Tory concealed in the barn, a search could at

once be made, and though there was no slight danger in the attempt, the young sergeant did not hesitate a moment on that account. He stationed a black at each corner of the barn, and although only two of them had guns, and they were only light shotguns, he ordered them to fire if the Tory appeared and refused to give himself up.

Then with the other two slaves John opened the barn door and entered. He had no weapon, and was aware that he might be exposing himself to the fire of a hidden and desperate man ; still he could not hesitate now.

Stopping for a moment he called : " Phil White, if you will give yourself up and come forth you will be protected."

He waited a moment, but no response was given. He repeated his summons, but still no answer came.

" Take the pitchforks, boys, and come on," he said at last. " We 'll find him if we have to throw everything out of the barn."

Instantly the search began. Into the nooks and crannies, into the bins and mangers they thrust their forks, but not a trace of the missing man could be found. Again and again they repeated their efforts, but without success.

"He may be in the mow," said John at last, and again he called aloud to the Tory to surrender, but only silence greeted his words.

To climb up the rude ladder which led to the loft was a matter involving peril to the first to attempt it; but John took that danger upon himself, and with his pitchfork in his hands made his way to the haymow. No resistance was offered him, and before he summoned his companions, he threw open the door through which the hay was usually pitched into the mow from the wagons outside. Not much of this labor had been done since the battle of Monmouth, but there was still a small amount of hay in the loft, and John was determined to make the search for the concealed man a thorough one.

"Pitch the hay right out of doors," he said when the blacks joined him. "Hold on a minute, boys," he added, "we'll give the Tory another chance. Phil White," he called, "will you give yourself up?"

As no response was made the men instantly set to work, John himself laboring with the others. The beams of the afternoon sun entered through the open door and illuminated all the loft. The hay was thrown through the doorway upon the ground beneath, and

with every forkfull the men stopped and thrust the tines into the remaining hay.

In this manner the labor continued until all the hay had been thrown out, and still Phil White could not be found. Puzzled and disheartened by their continued failure, John was almost inclined to believe that his eyes had deceived him, and that the Tory had not sought the refuge of the barn at all. The others, however, were all as positive as he had been that they had seen White enter, and as not one had seen him come forth, the natural conclusion was that he must still be in his hiding place. But what was it and where was it?

Again John and his companions went all over the barn. They thrust their pitchforks into every conceivable place, they called and shouted, but still White did not appear.

It was evening now, and John was almost exhausted by his labors. He was unable to continue the search, and yet he was unwilling to abandon it. At last, yielding to the pleadings of Hester, who had come forth from the house to beg her husband to desist, and the equally strong promises of the slaves to watch all night, he at last reluctantly yielded, and after entering the house and eating the supper



Hester had prepared, he threw himself heavily upon the bed, and was soon sleeping as only an almost exhausted man can sleep.

How long he had been there he did not know, but he was rudely awakened by the call of Cæsar, who was outside the window.

“Hi, Massa John! Wake up! Wake up! We done got ’im. We got ’im.”

Instantly John responded, and rushed from the house into the darkness toward the place from which the voices of the other blacks could be heard.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE SELECTION

THE sailor in the line directly in front of Peter and his new friend was now being examined by the officers, and the conversation could be distinctly heard by them both.

"You're an Englishman, I know," the examining officer was saying. "King George has need of those muscles of yours, and we'll find a berth for you aboard o' one of his best frigates."

"But I am not an Englishman," the wretched man protested. "I was born in Old Monmouth and live there. I have a mother and wife and babies there now."

Powerful man though the young sailor was, his body was trembling like a leaf, and his face was deadly pale.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the officer. "That's a likely story, and you'd better tell it to the King. We'll give you a chance to cross the ocean anyway."

"He speaks truly," interrupted Simon boldly. "I have known Ben Throop ever

since he was a boy, and he has always lived here in Jersey."

"Keep your words to yourself," retorted the officer harshly. "You may have need of all you can say to save yourself before we are done with you."

"That may be," replied Simon quietly, "but truth is true, and Ben Throop is no subject of the King, as his life and work on board the Betsy will bear witness."

"Stand aside," the officer said sharply to Throop. "We'll give you a chance to redeem yourself now."

Thus bidden Ben Throop was compelled to join the group of the Betsy's crew which had been separated from the others. So in his early manhood was the Jersey sailor taken from his home and country, and compelled not only to serve on board a British man-of-war, but also to fight against his own land. Nor was he restored when the war at last was brought to a close. Great Britain had other wars to wage, and Ben was far too valuable a man to lose. For years he struggled on, and at last slept in a nameless grave in a foreign land, and not one word did the waiting wife and mother ever receive from the missing sailor, nor did they ever learn of the sad end.

But then the lot of Ben Throop was not unlike that of many of those who had been his comrades on the Betsy, for one third of her crew were treated after the same manner, and, despite all protests or declarations that they were native-born Americans, they were enrolled as sailors in the British navy, which at the time was so sorely in need of men that a vigorous and able-bodied prisoner was not likely to escape.

It was now Simon's turn to step forward and be examined, and it was plain, from the interest with which the officer observed his sturdy frame and evident strength, that his fate was not likely to be different from that of Ben Throop.

"Another good Englishman," said the officer, placing his hand on Simon's shoulder as he spoke.

"I am not very good, but I'm more likely to be good than to be an Englishman," retorted Simon boldly.

"We'll look after that. We've a 'cat' which has a wonderful soothing effect on any Englishman who is not very 'good.' You're our man."

"I too was born in Jersey," said Simon quietly.

“That’s all right ; Jersey would be covered over with men if we believed the story of every one who declares he was born there. We’ll take our chances as to that, and I don’t believe the King will complain.”

“But I’m not fit for service,” persisted Simon ; “look at that.”

As he spoke he held up his hands, which to all appearance were sadly distorted. It seemed as if every joint was out of place, even the wrists being drawn and crooked.

“That’s a bird of another color,” said the officer quickly, as he examined the hands which Simon held forth to view. “The King wants no cripples. Pass on.”

Simon started at once to join his companions in the hold, but he lingered by the way to see how it fared with Peter, until he was sternly ordered to pass on, and soon disappeared from sight.

It was now Peter’s turn to undergo the terrible ordeal. As he stepped forward he glanced in despair toward the near-by Jersey shore. Thoughts of the brothers and sisters he had left behind crowded upon him, and his eyes filled with tears. How many times with his friend, Tom Coward, he had sailed over the very waters on which the Betsy and her

captor were then resting. And what good times he had had, too. And now perhaps for the last time he was gazing upon the familiar shores. It could not be true, he thought. It must be some horrible dream, and in a brief time he would be awakened and find himself once more with friends in the places he had known from the time of his earliest boyhood.

He was rudely recalled to the reality of his present peril by the voice of the officer, who was saying to his companion, "Here we have another Englishman sailing under false colors."

"Looks like it," replied the other man shortly.

"I am not an Englishman," Peter managed somehow to declare.

"Very likely. Probably you too were born here in Jersey."

"I was."

"I thought so," laughed the officer. "You've all agreed to tell the same story, I take it. I think he'll do for us," he suggested to the other officer, who was now standing by his side.

"I don't know, though we might try," he replied a little dubiously. "He's pretty slim to be able to sail in His Majesty's ships."



Peter, as we already know, was an exceptionally tall lad, standing at least a half head above any of the men on the deck, but his form had not yet filled out, and his appearance was not one which at first sight would impress the beholder as being that of a young man of great physical strength. In reality, however, Peter was possessed of extraordinary power, as many of his mates could testify after a wrestling bout, and when it came to the ability to endure a long and severe struggle there had not been one of them to compete with him.

For a moment his hopes rose as he heard the words of the officer, but his heart speedily sank again when the same man added, "I'm inclined to think we'd better give him a trial. We shan't be any the worse if he gives out."

"That's my opinion," said the first officer decidedly.

For an instant everything before him seemed to Peter to have suddenly become black. The Jersey shore began to rise and fall like the tossing waves about the ships, and even the deck on which he was standing seemed to share in the strange motion.

Hardly aware of what was going on, Peter

did not hear the words of the officers, and was only partly conscious that his pale face had caused them suddenly to change their decision. With a push which he barely felt he was sent to the hold, into which he fell headlong, and then for a moment he became entirely unconscious.

His eyes, when they opened, fell upon the face of Simon, who was bending over him and watching him tenderly as he rubbed his temples and chafed the hands of the helpless lad.

"You're all right now, Peter," he cried, as he saw that his efforts had not been in vain. "Better take a kick and a tumble here than have to taste o' the cat for a twelvemonth or more aboard the *Roe Buck*."

"Yes. I think I'm all right," said Peter, slowly sitting erect as he spoke.

It had all come back to him now, and in spite of the dreary place in which he found himself he was so rejoiced to have escaped what he considered the greater peril that his heart was lighter for the moment.

"I say, Simon," he continued, as he glanced at his friend, "how did you do that trick? How was it you fixed your hands?"

"Oh, that's a way I've had ever since I was a boy. I can throw my thumb and fingers

out of joint whenever I want to. I scared an old schoolmaster of mine almost out of his seven senses once. He had given me a good taste of his hickory ferule, — mind you, I'm not saying I did n't deserve it, — and after the performance I held up my hands with every joint in my fingers out of place, and told him to see what he had done. I threatened to tell my father, but you may be sure I did n't do it, for he'd have added some more of the same kind of medicine I'd just had, and I thought my system would n't stand any more. My father always told us boys that if we ever had any trouble with the teacher we might count on having a good sight more at home, so there were n't very many reports made, you may well believe."

Peter made no reply, for indeed he scarcely heard all that Simon was saying. His own thoughts were more of the sad predicament in which he found himself, for the feeling of gratitude for his escape from the more grievous peril was now absorbed in contemplation of the lesser peril which remained, wherein Peter Van Mater did not greatly differ from boys and men who have lived in the years which have followed those of the American Revolution.

There was no time given, however, even for such sad thoughts, for the men were soon ordered from the hold, and compelled to take their places on board a "wood-coaster," as the rude crafts were called which carried firewood to the great city. Captain Warner and his officers were also transferred, though they were confined in the cabin and so kept apart from the prisoners, whereby the British officers certainly displayed great wisdom.

This wood-coaster was soon under sail, and no doubt was left in the minds of any of the prisoners as to what their destination was to be, for they were headed for New York. As they sailed away they could see the *Roe Buck* lying at anchor behind them, but not a glimpse of the *May Day* could they obtain. They did not know that she had sailed in pursuit of the schooners which the *Betsy* had taken, nor did they learn until after many years had passed that she failed to overtake them, and that they had successfully made their way into the welcome port of Boston town.

The coaster, with the prisoners on board, and a guard of soldiers, soon entered the Narrows, and continued on her way to New York. Simon had stood by the side of Peter, and together they had been looking back upon the

receding Jersey shore, neither of them thinking of the long time which would lapse before they would see the shores of the famous old county, if indeed they were ever to be so fortunate as even to gain that simple privilege.

"I say," said Simon at last, in a low voice, glancing at the piles of cord wood which were to be seen on the deck of the vessel, "why would n't it be a good scheme to make a rush on the redcoats? We can each get a stick of wood, and we outnumber the soldiers six to one."

Peter glanced eagerly up as his companion spoke, and for a moment there was a light on his face not born of sheer desperation. In a brief time, however, he replied, "'T would be useless, Simon. If Captain Warner were here with us it might be wise to make the venture, but they have him all secure in the cabin."

"But we'd be almost as strong without him."

"No. The men would follow him anywhere, but there's no leader, you see, and 't would be every man for himself. I do not think the men would go into it alone."

"It may be as you say," replied Simon thoughtfully, "though I should much like to thump those fellows with a four-foot stick of

cord wood. Even if we lose the battle, 't would be a deal of satisfaction to feel that I'd put in one good blow for liberty. I think I could endure even the sugar-house then with a good grace."

Bitterly afterwards did both the young prisoners regret their decision, though at the time it seemed to them the part of wisdom to decide as they did.

The vessel had now turned the point, and all the prisoners could see a huge hulk lying at anchor not far before them. Men could be seen swarming over its decks, and at once as if by instinct every member of the Betsy's crew was aware of the destination to which they had been assigned.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE PRISON-SHIP JERSEY

“ ’T is the old Jersey ! ’T is the prison-ship ! ” said Peter in a low voice, unable to repress the shudder which crept over him at the sight.

“ Yes, ’t is the ‘ Hell Afloat ’ ! ” said Simon, for already the name by which the old hulk was known among the Americans was familiar to sailors and soldiers whose homes had been in Old Monmouth.

For a time no one spoke as they all gazed despondingly at the prison-ship, of which already so many dreadful stories had been told. Originally a seventy-four gun ship, at the commencement of the Revolution, the Jersey had been found to be in such a state of decay that she was declared unfit for service at sea, and so had been dismantled and moored in the East River, near the city, and used as a store-ship.

Early in the year when this story opened [1780], she had been converted into a prison-

ship, and was so used until the end of the war came. Because of the sickness which prevailed among the prisoners, which it was feared might spread to the shore, she was removed and moored with chain cables at the Wallabout, a lonely and at the time a desolate spot off the shore of Long Island.

As the wood-coaster came to anchor near the Jersey, the gloomy and forbidding appearance of the prison-ship became more apparent. As has been said, she was dismantled, her only spar being the bowsprit. A derrick that looked very like a gallows could be seen on the deck, and there was also a low flag-staff at the stern. The port-holes had been closed and secured, and in their places two tiers of holes could be seen, holes which had been cut through the sides of the ship, about two feet square and ten feet apart, and these had been rendered "safe" by a strong grating of iron bars.

Peter was almost on the point of giving way to his grief and despair, when he beheld the sombre ship, a feeling in no wise relieved at the evident disposition of Simon to join him. The latter, however, bravely strove to keep up a bold appearance, and turning to his friend said, with an attempt at banter,

“Look there, Peter. Our coming has caused a stir in the old hulk. They ’re sending some boats to greet us.”

Peter looked up and beheld two large boats, fashioned somewhat after the fashion of huge yawls, approaching, and their purpose in coming speedily became apparent when they came alongside, and the prisoners were roughly bidden to take their places on board.

As soon as the boats had been filled they were rowed back to the Jersey, where they deposited their cargo, and then at once returned for more. In this manner the boats passed and repassed until at last all the men had been transferred, and then the captain’s barge was sent to convey the officers of the *Betsy* to their place of confinement.

The prisoners were ordered to ascend to the upper deck of the Jersey, where their names were registered, and also the capacity in which each man had served previous to his capture. Each man was permitted to retain whatever clothing or bedding he had brought with him, all of which, however, was first carefully inspected to find out whether any weapons or money had been concealed in it. The men were then directed to pass through

a strong door on the larboard side, and then sent down a ladder leading to the main hatchway.

At this point in the story, in order to give something of a picture of the conditions in which Peter and Simon found themselves, and also to avoid any appearance of exaggeration, the author has deemed it wise to give *the very words* of one who was himself a prisoner on the Jersey, and kept a careful record of his adventures. The quotation from his records begins at his entrance into the main hatchway through which both our friends had just been sent.

“ I now found myself in a loathsome prison among a collection of the most wretched and disgusting-looking objects that I ever beheld in human form.

“ Here was a motley crew covered with rags and filth, visages pallid with disease, emaciated with hunger and anxiety, and retaining hardly a trace of their original appearance. Here were men who had once enjoyed life, while riding over the waves, or roaming through pleasant fields, full of health and vigor, now shriveled by a scanty and unwholesome diet, ghastly with inhaling an impure atmosphere, exposed to contagion, in

contact with disease, and surrounded by the horrors of darkness and death. Here, thought I, must I linger out the morning of my life, enduring a weary and degrading captivity, till death shall terminate my sufferings, and no friend will ever know of my departure. A prisoner on board 'the old Jersey!' The very thought was appalling; I could hardly realize my situation.

"The first thing we found it necessary to do after our captivity was to form ourselves into small parties called 'messes,' consisting of six men each, as previous to doing this we could obtain no food. All the prisoners were obliged to fast on the first day of their arrival; and seldom on the second could they obtain any food in season for cooking it. No matter how hungry they were, no deviation from the rules of the ship was permitted. All the prisoners fared alike; officers and sailors received the same treatment on board of this old hulk. We were all 'rebels.' The quantity and quality of our fare was the same for all. The only distinction known among us was made by the prisoners themselves, which was shown in allowing those who had been officers, previous to their capture, to congregate in the extreme after part of the ship,

and to keep it exclusively to themselves as their place of abode.

“The various messes of the prisoners were numbered, and nine in the morning was the hour when the steward would deliver, from the window in his room, the allowance granted to each mess. Each mess chose one of their company to be prepared to answer to their number, when it was called by the steward, and to receive the allowance as it was handed from the window.

“Whatever was thrust out must be taken; no change could be made in quantity or quality. Each mess received daily what was equivalent in weight or measure, but not in quality, to the rations of four men at full allowance: that is, each prisoner received two thirds as much as was allowed to a seaman in the British navy.

“Our bill of fare was as follows:—

“On Sunday, one pound of biscuit, one pound of pork, and half a pint of peas. Monday, one pound of biscuit, one pint of oatmeal, and two ounces of butter. Tuesday, one pound of biscuit, and two pounds of salt beef. Wednesday, one and a half pounds of flour, and two ounces of suet. Thursday was a repetition of Sunday's fare,



Friday of Monday's, and Saturday of Tuesday's.

"If this food had been of good quality and properly cooked, as we had no labor to perform, it would have kept us comfortable, at least from suffering. But this was not the case. All our food appeared to be damaged.

"The bread was mouldy and filled with worms. It required considerable rapping upon the deck before the worms could be dislodged from their lurking places in a biscuit.

"As for the pork, we were cheated out of it more than half of the time; and when it was obtained one would have judged from its motley hues, exhibiting the consistence and appearance of variegated and fancy soap, that it was the flesh of porpoise or sea hog, and had been an inhabitant of the ocean rather than of the sty. But whatever doubts might arise respecting the genera or species of the beasts, the flavor of the flesh was so unsavory that it would have been rejected as unfit for the stuffing even of Bologna sausages.

"The peas were generally damaged, and, from the imperfect manner in which they were cooked, were about as indigestible as grape shot. The butter the reader will not

suppose was real ‘Goshen’; and had it not been for its adhesive properties to retain together the particles of the biscuit, that had been so riddled by the worms as to lose all their attraction of cohesion, we should have considered it no valuable addition to our viands.

“The flour and oatmeal were often sour, and when the suet was mixed with it, we should have considered it a blessing to have been destitute of the sense of smelling before we admitted it into our mouths, and it might be nosed half the length of the ship.

“And last, though not the least item among our staples in the eating line, — our beef. The first view of it would excite an idea of veneration for its antiquity, and not a little curiosity to ascertain to what kind of an animal it had originally belonged. Its color was of dark mahogany, and its solidity would have set the keen edge of a broad axe at defiance to cut across the grain, though, like oakum, it could be pulled into pieces one way like rope-yarn. A streak of fat in it would have been a phenomenon that would have brought all the prisoners together to see and admire. It was so completely saturated with salt, that after having been boiled in water

taken from the sea, it was found to be considerably freshened by the process. It was no uncommon thing to find it extremely tender; but then this peculiarity was not owing to its being a prime cut from a premium ox, but rather owing to its long keeping, — the vicissitudes of heat and cold, of humidity and aridity it had experienced in the course of time, — and of this disposition to tenderness we were duly apprised by the extraordinary fragrance it emitted before and after it was cooked. It required more skill than we possessed to determine whether the flesh, which we were obliged to devour, had once covered the bones of some luckless bull that had died of starvation, or of some worn-out horse that had been killed for the crime of having outlived his usefulness.

“Such was our food. But the quality of it was not all that we had reason to complain of. The manner in which it was cooked was more injurious to our health than the quality of the food, and in many cases laid the foundation of diseases that brought many a sufferer to his grave years after his liberation.

“The cooking for the prisoners was done in a great copper vessel, that contained between two and three hogsheads of water, set in brick

work. The form of it was square, and it was divided into two compartments by a partition. In one of these, the peas and oatmeal were boiled. This was done in fresh water. In the other the meat was boiled in salt water, taken up from alongside of the ship. The Jersey, from her size and lying near the shore, was imbedded in the mud, and I do not recollect seeing her afloat during the whole time I was a prisoner. . . . The impurity of the water may be easily conceived; and in this water our meat was boiled.

“It will be recollected, too, that the water was salt, which caused the inside of the copper to become corroded to such a degree that it was lined with a coat of verdigris. Meat thus cooked must in some degree be poisoned; and the effects of it were manifest in the cadaverous countenances of the emaciated beings who had remained on board for any length of time.

“The persons chosen by each mess to receive their portions of food were summoned by the cook’s bell to receive their allowance, and when it had remained in the boiler a certain time, the bell would sound again, and the allowance must be immediately taken away; whether it was sufficiently cooked or not, it

could remain no longer. The food was generally very imperfectly cooked ; yet this sustenance, wretched as it was, and deficient in quantity, was greedily devoured by the half-starved prisoners.

“No vegetables were allowed us. Many times since, when I have seen, in the country, a large kettle of potatoes and pumpkins steaming over the fire to satisfy the appetites of a farmer’s swine, I have thought of our destitute and starved condition, and what a luxury we should have considered the contents of that kettle, on board the Jersey.

“The prisoners were confined in the two main decks below. The lowest dungeon was inhabited by those prisoners who were foreigners, whose treatment was more severe than that of the Americans.

“The inhabitants of this lower region were the most miserable and disgusting-looking objects that can be conceived. Daily washing in salt water, together with their extreme emaciation, caused their skin to appear like dried parchment. Many of them remained unwashed for weeks ; their hair long, and matted, and filled with vermin ; their beards never cut, excepting occasionally with a pair of shears, which did not improve their comeli-

ness, though it might add to their comfort. Their clothes were mere rags, secured to their bodies in every way that ingenuity could devise.

“In the morning, the prisoners were permitted to ascend the upper deck to spend the day till ordered below at sunset. A certain number, who were for the time called ‘the working party,’ performed, in rotation, the duty of bringing up hammocks and bedding for airing, likewise the sick and infirm, and the bodies of those who had died during the night. Of these there were generally a number every morning. After these services it was their duty to wash the decks. Our beds and clothing were allowed to remain on deck till we were ordered below for the night. This was of considerable benefit, as it gave some of the vermin an opportunity to migrate from the quarters they had inhabited.

“About two hours before sunset, orders were given to the prisoners to carry all their things below; but we were permitted to remain above till we retired for the night into our crowded and unhealthy dungeons. At sunset, our ears were saluted with the insulting and hateful sound from our keepers, of ‘Down, rebels, down!’ and we were hurried



below, the hatchways fastened over us, and were left to pass the night amid the accumulated horrors of sighs and groans, of foul vapor, a nauseous atmosphere, in a stifling and almost suffocating heat.

“The tiers of holes through the sides of the ship were strongly grated, but not provided with glass; and it was considered a privilege to sleep near one of these apertures in hot weather for the pure air that passed in at them. But little sleep could be enjoyed even then, for the vermin were so horribly abundant that all the personal cleanliness we could practice would not protect us from their attacks or prevent their effecting a lodgment upon us.

“When any of the prisoners died in the night their bodies were brought to the upper deck in the morning and placed upon the gratings. If the deceased had owned a blanket, any prisoner might sew it around the corpse, and then it was lowered, with a rope tied around the middle, down the side of the ship into a boat. Some of the prisoners were allowed to go on shore, under a guard, to perform the labor of interment. Having arrived on the shore they found in a small hut some tools for digging and a hand-barrow

on which the body was conveyed to the place for burial.

“Here in a bank near the Wallabout a hole was excavated in the sand in which the body was put, and then slightly covered ; the guard not giving sufficient time to perform this melancholy service in a faithful manner. Many bodies would in a few days after this mockery of a burial be exposed nearly bare by the action of the elements.”

It was, then, in the midst of these horrors (described by Ebenezer Fox) that our two young prisoners found themselves, and of their experiences there the coming chapters will tell.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE CAPTURE

ON the border of the woods before him John Russell could see a group of men whom he instantly recognized as the blacks belonging to the place. They were evidently excited, and had surrounded some object on the ground which nevertheless they were careful not to approach too closely. Each black held a huge club, while two of them also had burning torches in their hands which threw a weird light about the scene and intensified the shadows of the tall trees.

John increased his speed and soon joined the group, though at first he was unable to discover the cause of the excitement. The only object on the ground he could see was a large log, and why this should so arouse the black men he could not understand.

"We got 'im, Massa John! We done got 'im!" repeated Cæsar as his young master approached.

"Got him? Well, where is he then? I don't see him anywhere."

“We got ’im des’ same,” responded Cæsar gleefully. “He right in dere.”

“Where? In that log?” inquired John in surprise.

“Yas, sah. Right in dere, Massa John.”

By dint of several questions the sergeant managed to find out that the blacks in their watch had started an opossum, which in its flight had also started a man whom they had quickly recognized as Philip White. The sight of the Tory had instantly dispelled even the temptation which an opossum presented, and they had pursued him in spite of the fact that he held a gun in his hands while the only weapons they possessed were their heavy clubs. Either because he was alarmed by the pursuit or because he did not wish to discharge his gun, and thereby give warning of his presence to the inmates of the house, White had speedily run to cover, which in this instance proved to be a hollow log. Quick as his movements were, he had been unable to deceive his pursuers, and the blacks had seen him crawl into his hiding-place.

Their courage, however, visibly cooled when it came to a personal encounter with the desperate Tory, and the natural result had been that “Massa John” had been summoned to their aid.

His arrival served to revive somewhat their fallen bravery, and as John at once assumed command they eagerly obeyed his orders. The men were stationed at either end of the log, and then John called to the man within.

“We have you now, Phil White, and if you give yourself up quietly there will be no trouble. Come out, and give yourself up!”

No response was made to the hail, though John waited a minute for the Tory to appear.

“It will be better for you, Phil White,” repeated John. “I’m giving you a chance now to save yourself. Come out, and there’ll be no trouble.”

Still no reply was made, and for a moment John was almost tempted to believe that the blacks were mistaken, and that the man was not really concealed in the log. Cæsar, however, was very positive, and hoping rather than believing that White was inside the log, which John kicked several times, without producing any other effect than to convince him that it was indeed hollow, he ordered one of the blacks to go to the barn and bring an axe and a pitchfork.

Before the slave returned John took a torch from Cæsar’s hand, and bending low before one of the entrances of the log, though he

took good pains to keep himself outside the range of any gun which might be discharged by the Tory, shouted : —

“ Phil White, I call upon you for the last time. You can come out now or I will set fire to the log and roast you out. You can take your choice, but if you come, you come now.”

This time the summons was heeded, and all could hear the rustling caused by the movements of some one within the log. A shout went up from the blacks ; but John, elated though he was, was not unmindful of the peril, and once more addressing the invisible man, he called, “ Hand out your gun first, White ! Push it out, if you can’t hand it.”

A gun barrel was pushed out of the opening, and with a feeling of relief the sergeant grasped it, and his feeling was not decreased, we may be sure, when once more he held his own gun in his hands.

“ Now, hand out your pistol ! ” called John.

The huge pistol which White carried was also pushed out, and as one of the blacks seized it John motioned for him to stand ready to use it. He looked to the priming of his own gun, and then shouted as if the man he was summoning was a long distance away.



"Now, come out yourself, Phil White, and don't waste any time in doing it either!"

Slowly the feet of the Tory emerged from the log, and then his body protruded. Before he could rise to his feet he was seized by the watching men, and his hands were securely bound behind his back.

"At last I have you," said John slowly, as he looked at White, who was now standing before him.

"So it seems," replied the Tory drily.

"The first one to be run to the ground," said John, almost as if he were talking to himself.

"Now look here, John Russell," said White sharply. "You are not a fool, or I am greatly mistaken. What do you expect to gain by this?"

"I have gained you, and that is something."

"Something you'll be sorry for, or my name's not Phil White. You have me in your power, it is true. You can shoot me or hang me or turn me over to the tender mercies of your Jersey Blues if you so choose, but what good will it do you? You'll only call down upon yourself something worse than anything you can do to me. Do you think

Lippencott will be idle when he hears what has become of me?"

"Probably not. I only hope he will dare to leave the shelter of New York, where I understand he now is, doubtless plotting some wickedness along with Ben Franklin's traitor son. If he'll only come down here into Old Monmouth again we'll try to see that he meets his just deserts."

"He'll meet nothing of the kind, and you know it. What will be done is this: your place will be burned, your wife and mother and baby will be turned out of home, or something worse than that will befall them, and not one stone will be left upon another here."

White paused a moment, keenly watching the young soldier to observe what the effect of his words had been. That John was troubled by the implied threat was apparent, for none knew better than he that the very words of White were likely to be fulfilled. Mistaking the anxiety of John for something more, White eagerly resumed:—

"Now, John Russell, the best thing for you to do is to let me go, and you know it. If you do, you and yours will never suffer any harm. I can promise you that. If you do not, then" —

"Be still, Phil White," said John sternly. "You are here in my power, and I shall turn you over to the proper authorities, and they must deal with you as your crimes deserve, or as they think best. You shall never be set free by me."

"Just as you say; not as I care," replied the Tory, with apparent indifference. "I've told you the truth, and your blood be upon your own head now."

"And yours upon you," replied John solemnly. "Come with me, and I'll place you where you'll not escape us again. Were you in the barn, Phil White? How did you escape us?"

"Oh yes, I believe I was in your barn, now that you mention it," laughed the prisoner. "Did you object to my presence there?"

"How was it that you escaped us?"

"Nothing easier than that," laughed White. "I just lifted a board from the barn floor and crawled under it, and then put it back in place."

"Strange I never thought of that," said John, somewhat chagrined. "Come on, and we'll go into the house."

"Massa John," interrupted Cæsar, "somebody comin'."

John looked up and listened intently. Through the forest he could hear the sounds of some one approaching. It was evident that he was on horseback, for the whinny of a horse could be distinctly heard as the beast, aware that he was approaching some human habitation, sent forth his hail. Cæsar was directed to look after the prisoner, while the young sergeant with his gun in his hands hastened to meet the approaching stranger and ascertain whether he was friend or foe.

To John's infinite relief the man was found to be Captain Huddy himself, and in response to John's greeting he swung himself from the saddle, and grasping the bridle of the horse, walked on by the side of his friend.

John hurriedly related the story of the visit and capture of Phil White, as they returned to the place where the prisoner had been left in Cæsar's charge, and the interest of the captain, we may be sure, was not slight.

Just before they joined the blacks both men were startled by the sound of a pistol-shot, which was followed by a shout which John quickly recognized as Cæsar's. Instantly divining the cause, John left his companion and rushed forward to the place where the light

of the torches could now be seen; but he had no sooner arrived than his ears were greeted by the sound of Cæsar's wail, —

"He done got away, Massa John! He got away!"

"Take after him, then! What are you standing here for?" shouted John.

The blacks scattered, obedient to the command, and Captain Huddy, who had now come up, leaped quickly upon the back of his horse and dashed into the woods in the direction in which John indicated. A careful search for a half hour failed to reveal any trace of the fugitive, and at last, convinced that further pursuit in the darkness would be useless as well as dangerous, John reluctantly whistled, and soon all the band was gathered about him.

"What shall I do, Captain Huddy?" inquired John in despair.

"Keep the blacks at it all night or until they get some trace of him."

"Yas, sah, Massa John," interrupted Cæsar, "dat's des right. We git 'im."

"How did he get away from you, Cæsar?" inquired John sternly.

"Don' know, Massa John. He des go, dat all. I look at 'im and look at 'im, and nebber

once look oder way. But he des up an' run, dat what he do, an' I git 'im. Sho', Massa John, we fin' 'im."

"Well, take after him, then, and see that you do. Keep your pistol, Cæsar. You may want it."

"Yas, sah," responded the slave, as he and his companions vanished in the woods.

John, too weak himself longer to assist in the search, returned to the house with his visitor. Captain Huddy tied his horse to the post, and then entered the house, where for a long time he sat conversing with his friends. The discouraging outlook for the country, the reverses of the sturdy Continentals in the South, the increasing uneasiness among the American officers as to the loyalty of some of their own men, the murmurings of the people over their privations and sufferings, as well as over what they were pleased to call the inactivity of Washington, were all gone over.

The conversation was not an inspiring one, but the courage and determination of the serious-minded leader of the Monmouth militia was not without their effect upon his younger companion, and when on the following morning Captain Huddy was about to depart for



the camp, John said, "I'll stand by you to the end."

"That's right. 'T is a just cause, and in the end must prevail. We shall not be unmindful of you either, John Russell, for 't is not all give and no receive in this war. I shall send a detail of a half dozen men to you to-day to search out Phil White or any other lurking traitor hereabouts. The blacks may bring you some word soon."

"They may," replied John dubiously.

"Either they or the men will. And I may come myself. Good-by."

As the captain rode away John watched him as long as he could be seen, but he was almost startled, when he turned to enter the house again, to behold Moses standing directly behind him. Whence he had come or how, he did not know, and the sight was far from being a welcome one to the sadly troubled young soldier.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE TRAIL OF THE TORY

THE presence of Moses the slave at a time so near to the escape of White did not of itself tend to allay the suspicions in John's heart. Coming and going as the black had been doing, the plausible explanations he had so readily given of his movements were of themselves sufficient to make his young master anxious, for Moses ever had a reply ready for every question. In Cæsar's devotion and trustworthiness John had a feeling of confidence which nothing as yet had shaken, though he was well aware of the treachery of many of the slaves and the strenuous efforts the Tories were putting forth to draw them to the side of the invaders. But Moses was a "man of another color," John was wont to say, in spite of the fact that the face of each was as black as that of a human being could well be.

In response to John's questions Moses gave his usual glib replies, which, though evidently satisfactory to himself, only served to increase

his master's uneasiness the more. The slave declared that he had not heard a word as to the actions of Phil White, and had no more knowledge of the place where he then was than had King John himself. The sergeant was too weak in body to dare trust his physical strength, and so his main reliance was upon the feeling for the family which he knew had not entirely departed from the mind of Moses. The long years of servitude had left their impress upon him as they had upon his unfortunate fellows in slavery, and "Massa John" was still a name not to be lightly used.

"Moses," said John at last, "the boys have gone out to look for White. And I'm inclined to think you'd better go too. If you can bring him in or tell us where we can find him you'll make yourself all right with us, for I think Captain Huddy, as well as I, is very suspicious of you."

"Yas, sah, yas, sah, Massa John," replied Moses glibly. "Spec' I kin fin' 'im. Ebery one ob de boys gone?" he added, with a keen glance at his master, a glance which was not lost upon John.

"Yes, they're all gone. The place will be safe enough as long as I have my rifle and Phil White's horse pistol. You need have no

fears as to the safety of us here. Now, off you go, and mind that you bring me some word about Phil White, or it'll be the worse for you."

"Yas, sah! Yas, sah!" replied Moses, withdrawing from the room with a smile upon his countenance, which, though it was so broad that it seemed almost to extend from ear to ear, did not allay John's fears.

Left to himself, the young sergeant, after seeing that all the family were in bed and the bolts and bars were securely fastened for the night, stretched himself upon the rude couch. But sleep would not come to him. The stirring events of the day had produced a reaction which left the young soldier alert and wakeful. The fear of Moses added to his nervousness, and many a time during the night the sergeant left his couch and made the rounds of the doors and windows to satisfy himself that all was well. A light snow had fallen and covered the ground with its mantle, which increased the dim light, and enabled him to see far out toward the woods.

Not a man or a sign of danger was discovered, however, and not long after sunrise, Captain Huddy with a band of six mounted men rode up to the doorway. The relief in

John's heart was great when he welcomed the doughty leader ; but neither of them had any fresh information to give the other.

Accepting Hester's invitation to enter, the men dismounted, and, after looking to the wants of their horses, seated themselves before the low table in the kitchen to eat the breakfast she hastened to provide. King John was an interested observer of the men, and when his father seated himself in the room he crawled into his lap, though never once did he turn away his eyes from the stern and rugged face of Captain Huddy.

"The little lad seems to have recovered from his assault," said the captain, apparently for the first time becoming aware of the presence of the boy.

"Yes, 'King John' is still here, though he is never still, not even when the redcoats pour their lead into him. Is he, my boy?" he added, drawing the lad closer to himself as he spoke.

"Why do you call him 'King'?"

"Because he is king here. He rules us all. I think even Moses feels somewhat the power of the throne."

"I like not the word," said Captain Huddy grimly. "To me 'king' in any form savors

too much of tyranny. I cannot understand how you can use the word even in jest."

"You would if you lived here, captain," laughed John. "Every one has to bow before his sceptre."

John was well aware of the stern patriotism of his visitor, a feeling which at times became so strong as almost to be fanaticism. He had entered into the struggle with might, mind, and strength, and to him there was now no lighter side of life. Everything had been lost apparently in the one unyielding determination to fight on to the bitter end. Family and friends, home ties, and even the affections of life were in a measure forgotten while the sturdy man gave himself to the defense of his country. His zeal and fervor were not without their effects upon the men of the region, and as John Russell well knew the feeling of his visitor, he said no more concerning the title which had been bestowed upon his boy, but gave himself to the discussion of the means to be employed in bringing Phil White to justice, or into their hands, which was much the same thing in the mind of Captain Joshua Huddy.

"And you have n't heard a word from any of the blacks?" inquired the captain.



“Not a word. ’Tis strange, too, for I had thought some of them would be back here long before this hour.”

“More likely they have gone to join the traitors themselves,” said the captain gloomily. “Even the best of our slaves are not to be trusted now.”

“The more shame to us then,” retorted John sharply, for his feeling concerning the slaves and the treatment given them by the Monmouth men was keen, as we already have cause to know.

“How is that? I do not understand.”

Before John could reply he rose from his seat, and placing the “King” in the chair darted out of the door. Through the window he had seen Cæsar running toward the house, and instantly perceived that something of unusual importance had occurred.

“What is it, Cæsar? What is it?” he said excitedly as he approached the slave.

“Massa John, we done fine ’im,” gasped Cæsar, who was almost breathless.

“Have you taken him? Where is he? Where is he?”

“Have n’t got ’im, Massa John; but fine whar him be.”

“Where is he?”

“Right ober dare by de chestnut gully. He habin’ breakfas’ right now. If hurry up, mebbe get ’im.”

John did not delay to hear more, but quickly returned to the house with the information the black had brought. The captain quietly ordered his men to mount, and at once prepared to start.

“You are not going, John?” inquired Hester uneasily. “You are in no condition to follow this man.”

“Yes, yes. Of course I ’m going.”

“But you have no horse.”

“Captain Huddy will loan me one.”

“But there will be no one left to protect us here. I think your mother and ‘King John’ have suffered enough to make you think of them now,” protested Hester sturdily, determined if it lay within her power to prevent her husband from venturing upon an expedition that to her seemed so dangerous, and for which he was not sufficiently recovered to be of much service.

“Captain Huddy,” called John sharply, “will you leave two of your men here to guard the house? I will take one of the horses and Cæsar the other, and so you ’ll be as strong as before.”

Captain Huddy quickly agreed to the proposal, and in a brief time both John and Cæsar were on horseback, and the little band moved away in the direction in which the black had declared lay the camp of the man they were so eager to capture.

John did not once glance behind him, — perhaps he did not dare trust himself to do so; but if he had looked back he would have seen his wife holding “King John” in her arms and standing in the low doorway as long as the men remained within sight.

The place where Cæsar had said the Tory would be found was one well known by John, for from his earliest boyhood he had every autumn gone there for the nuts which had given the name to the gully. It was a lonely spot in the woods about five miles distant from the house; and turning aside from the beaten track John led the way by a path known to but few beside himself, and after a brisk ride of a half hour they had arrived upon the borders.

The party now advanced more slowly, John with Cæsar by his side riding in front, and as their horses walked slowly forward the men glanced anxiously about them for some traces of the Tory.

Suddenly John drew the rein on his horse, and held up his hand for the men to halt. Directly before him he had perceived a man who had dodged behind a tree, and was evidently trying to conceal himself from their sight.

"Wait here till I ride ahead and see what it is," said the sergeant in a whisper, at the same time advancing cautiously toward the place where the man had been seen.

His surprise was great when he discovered the man in hiding to be Moses the slave, and as he perceived him John said sharply, "Moses, what does this mean? What are you doing here?"

"Yas, sah; yas, sah, Massa John. I done took you for de Tory."

"You thought I was Phil White, did you?"

"Yas, sah; yas, sah, Massa John. I did fo' a fac'. Yo' mos' skeer de bref right outen me. Yas, sah, Massa John, you did fo' a fac'. Don' know what I do if you sho'ly been dat man."

"Come back here with me, Moses," said John sharply, as he led the way back to his companions. "Now, Moses," he said, when he had explained the presence of the slave to

the others, "you 've seen Phil White, I know you have. Where is he?"

"Yas, sah, yas, sah, Massa John, I tole yo' de truf."

"You 'd better."

"Yas, sah. Yas, sah, dat 's des what I goin' ter do. I tole yo' de truf. I spec' Phil White am right ober dar, des about er mile, Massa John. Yas, sah, yas, sah. He des about er mile right ober dar."

John looked up and saw that Cæsar was regarding him intently. He also observed a strange expression in the black man's eyes, and was positive that Cæsar shook his head as if he was trying to impress upon his master the fact that he should not give heed to the words of Moses.

The hint was not lost upon the sergeant, and he quickly turned to Moses, and said, "I fancy you are mistaken, Moses. We'll keep on in the direction in which we were going for a while. You come with us," he added, "and walk right beside my horse's head."

As John spoke he drew forth a pistol, which he held in his right hand, and grasped his bridle with the left. The face of Moses turned almost to the color of ashes, and his terror was so evident that no further confir-

mation was needed to convince John that the black man had been trying to mislead them.

“Yas, sah, yas, sah, Massa John. I go wid yo’. Course I go wid yo’; but yo’ make a big mistake, Massa John. Yo’ fine Phil White ober dar des as I tole yo’.” The black’s teeth were chattering, and his body was trembling in every limb as he spoke.

John made no reply, and with increased caution the little body advanced slowly in the direction which Cæsar had indicated, resolved to discover which had spoken the truth, and to deal with the other as his just deserts merited.



## CHAPTER XIX

### A PROJECT

PETER VAN MATER and his friend Simon fortunately were in the same mess, and for a few days their hopes were high in spite of the misery of their condition, because Captain Warner had refused to be separated from his men, and he, too, belonged to their little company. The inspiration of his presence and his powers of leadership were looked to by his men much as children are accustomed to follow their parents; but when a week had passed the sturdy little captain was withdrawn from the prison-ship, and many years elapsed before any of his fellow-prisoners learned what disposal had been made of him.

Simon apparently continued to be light-hearted, and his spirits did much to cheer Peter, who was strongly inclined to be despondent. And small wonder was it that the Jersey lad should be almost overcome by the misery of his condition. Not only was he sorely troubled over the care of his brothers

and sisters, who were almost entirely dependent upon him, but the prospect on board the ship was daily becoming darker. A pestilence had broken out, and every morning when the cry, "Rebels, bring up your dead," was heard, the response was of a character to sadden stronger hearts than that of the youthful prisoner.

The younger ones seemed to be especially subject to the disease, and had it not been for the constantly increasing numbers of those who were brought on board, the Jersey would soon have been without a man to guard. Some of the old records inform us that almost eleven thousand men died on board the prison-ship during the war of the Revolution. However, as the claim cannot be verified, let us mercifully hope that the numbers were exaggerated, and though we know that multitudes found an unknown grave along the shore of the adjacent island, perhaps the bitter feeling in the hearts of the people at the time led them to enlarge the numbers of those who pined away and died amidst the horrors of the prison-ship.

To-day we know that the true state of affairs on board the Jersey was not fully appreciated by the men in command at New

York, and there is a slight cause for mercy in our judgment because of that fact. But the condition was horrible beyond the power of pen to describe, and any one who has ever had a feeling that war is glorious might do well to pause and think of the living death of the poor men, who, when our country was struggling for her independence, found themselves compelled to endure the miseries of the life into which Peter and Simon were cast.

"We'll not stay here long," remarked Simon decidedly, one night after they had been greeted with the cry, "Down rebels, down!" and the hatchways had been barred till the morning sun should appear.

"I don't see how you'll prevent it," replied Peter gloomily.

"We'll leave, that's what we'll do."

"Will you stop to bid farewell to the captain?" inquired Peter, his face for the moment lighting up with a sad smile, which only served to make more distinct the ravages which hunger was already making.

"No, I'll not say good-by to the captain," replied Simon sturdily. "He is n't worth it, and besides he would n't know enough to give a civil reply."

"Are you going alone?"

"Never. You're like my shadow, Peter. Wherever I go you'll go, too. Now listen and I'll tell you my plan. You know the regular crew of this old hulk consists of only a captain, two mates, a steward, and about a dozen sailors."

"But there's a guard sent here every week from the shore."

"I know that, but what are they? They're men who are unfit for service, and what could they do if the prisoners should rise against them?"

"They could n't do very much of themselves, I suppose, but what could we do if we did get the better of them?"

"Time enough to think of that when the time comes."

"No, there is n't time enough. I want to get away as much as you do, but just look at it soberly for a minute, Simon. The only place we could go to would be Long Island, and the British troops, many of them, at least, are quartered there, and the country swarms with Tories who would be only too glad to turn us over to the redcoats again."

"Some have got away, say what you will," retorted Simon sturdily; "and what others have done we can do, can't we?"

“ Yes, I suppose so ; but you don’t want to forget how many more there have been who tried to get away and did n’t succeed.”

“ Yes, I do want to forget them, I tell you ! If some got away that ’s enough for me, and I ’ll follow them and not the others.”

Peter made no response, and endeavored to fall asleep, but the vermin and foul air seemed to be worse than ever before. Simon soon forgot his project and the miseries of the night as he lay by Peter’s side breathing heavily, but his companion was awake most of the night. For a long time he thought over the proposal of his friend, but the more he thought of it the more hopeless it appeared to be. What could be done by an unarmed, half-starved, sickly mob, such as the prisoners made, against even a small force of armed men ? And then, too, worse than all, was the conviction that the redcoats on Long Island would be almost certain to retake them, and the thought of the increased miseries which would be heaped upon them in case they should be recaptured was almost more than he could bear.

On the following day Peter saw that Simon was talking quietly and earnestly with many of the prisoners, and easily divined the topic

of his conversation. Interested as he was to learn the result, he found no opportunity to converse with his friend until they were once more shut in for the night.

"What luck have you had, Simon?" he whispered.

"No luck at all. The men are all chicken-hearted. There's no use trying to get them to do anything. They are n't worth working up, and we'll leave them here. They'd only bother us if we took them with us."

"There's another reason for not talking to them besides that."

"What is it?"

"Some one will be sure to tell, and the first thing you know you'll be pulled up for plotting an escape."

"It may be as you say," replied Simon thoughtfully. "I'm sure the most of them are to be trusted, but one half-hearted man can do more harm than all the others can do good."

"You'll have to give it up, for there's no use, I'm afraid, in trying. Perhaps we'll be exchanged, or the war will come to an end pretty soon."

"I'd rather wait for Gabriel to blow his trumpet," retorted Simon sharply.



“Hush! You must n’t talk so loud. Some one will hear you.”

“Never you mind, though. I’ll find a way or make one, yet.”

Disconsolate as Peter felt, he was nevertheless more inclined to share in an attempt to escape than he had been willing to have his friend understand. Of Simon’s courage he well knew, but he was so impulsive and at times inclined to be so reckless that he did not care to stimulate him more than the present prospects seemed to warrant.

As the days and weeks passed the numbers of wretched men on board the Jersey increased, and Peter’s feeling of recklessness became at last almost as marked as that of Simon. Anything, he thought, would be better than to endure the hopeless misery longer. Even to fall in the attempt would be only to hasten the end which was certain to come in any event, if no relief was found, and as a man could die but once it was better to suffer that in one sharp moment than to prolong the agony through a long drawn out period of suffering — or at least so thought Peter Van Mater.

Already he could see the many changes which had come over his comrades as well as over himself. The faces had become gaunt

and pinched, the hair and beards of the men were unkempt and matted, and their strength was steadily failing. Soon it would be too late even to make an attempt to escape, for there would not be sufficient strength left in their frail bodies to enable them to make their way to the shore, to say nothing of resisting if they should be retaken.

Matters were made worse by the knowledge that some of the men had disappeared from the ship, and though no word was spoken concerning their absence, it required no explanation to know what had become of them. Occasionally a few would be brought back, and the punishments inflicted upon them might well have caused any one who was plotting to follow their example to falter in his attempt.

Several weeks passed, and still Peter and Simon were apparently as far from the longed-for opportunity as ever they had been. Even Simon appeared to be disheartened, for he had not referred to his favorite project for several days.

It was nightfall, and the prisoners had rushed into the hold, a disorderly crowd, in obedience to the hateful call. When the boys found themselves in their accustomed

place they discovered that all six of their neighboring mess were missing.

"They've done it! They've got away!" whispered Simon excitedly.

"It looks like it, though I don't see how they did it," replied Peter.

"I've learned one thing, at all events," replied Simon eagerly, "and that's something. It's taken me weeks to find out that much."

"What is it? What do you mean?"

"That there is n't any use in talking up your plan with too many. I've learned that every mess keeps its plans to itself."

"'T is the only safe way," responded Peter.

"That's what we'll do, and we'll do it soon, too."

It was learned on the following day that the men had really gone, and though no word was spoken of the missing men by the guard, the increased vigilance became at once apparent, and that of itself was sufficient to lead Peter and Simon to postpone any attempt they had it in mind to make.

It was about a week after the disappearance of the half dozen men when Peter perceived from Simon's actions that something of unusual importance was on foot. Although

he was eager to learn what it was, Peter was so fearful that his more impulsive comrade would betray his project that he purposely kept away from him throughout the day.

"Everything is fixed," whispered Simon, when at last he and his friend lay stretched side by side upon the loathsome floor. "You have n't seemed to be very anxious to have a share in it, though."

"I saw there was something in the wind," replied Peter, "but I was so afraid you'd let some one see what it was that I kept away from you. I knew you would tell me just as soon as we were here."

"That's what I'm going to tell you now. Keep still, Peter. Is any one listening?"

The boys listened breathlessly, but as they did not appear to be observed Simon went on with his project. "You know the 'round house?'"

"Yes."

Peter was familiar with the place, which was nothing more than a small store-room or closet, which for the convenience of the officers had been constructed under the fore-castle. It was, however, kept locked, and what his friend planned to do there Peter could not understand.

"Well," continued Simon, "I picked the lock to-day, so that if no one goes into it to-morrow we'll use it ourselves. When the call comes for us to 'down,' we'll all of us hide there. Then after a little while we'll open it together and make a break for the rail. We can swim ashore, I think. At all events it's our only hope."

"You say 'all.' Who are the all?"

"Our mess."

"All six of them?"

"Yes, all six."

"Do they understand about it?"

"Yes, I've given the word to every one. We'll stand or fall together."

"I'm glad of it. We can't do more than fail."

"That is n't the word, Peter," said Simon eagerly. "It's our only hope, and we must make the very best of it."

The following day was one of the keenest excitement to all the members of the chosen mess. They did their best not to appear uneasy or to do anything to arouse the suspicions of the guard, yet somehow the eyes of all were seldom turned away from the round house.

To their delight not one of the officers

entered the place throughout the day, and when night fell and the cry "Down rebels! Down!" was heard, both Peter and Simon knew that the supreme moment had come.



## CHAPTER XX

### THE ROUND HOUSE

THE order had no sooner been given than the deck of the Jersey was a scene of confusion. Eager to escape the blows of the guard, every man apparently was looking out for himself alone, and so scrambling, pushing, rushing toward the open hatchways the unruly mob surged. The sun had disappeared from sight, and the dim light, added to the confusion, aided the half dozen prisoners who were waiting to seize the opportunity for which they had been breathlessly waiting.

The location of the round house, as well as the position the guard had taken near the hatchways, favored the mess; and delaying until the most of the prisoners had gathered about the entrance to the hold, they quickly entered the place, the door to which Simon held open for them.

To their consternation they discovered that there was room within for but five men, and then only when they were crowded closely together.

“Shut the door. I’ll find a place on deck,” said Putnam, one of the band, quickly, and terrified as his companions were, and perhaps governed by a certain selfishness as well, they instantly complied, and closed the door, leaving young Putnam outside and alone.

He, however, was too bold a man to give up, now that success seemed to be so near, and instantly perceiving a huge tub on the deck near the round house, he crawled under it, and so for the time was as effectively concealed as were his comrades.

As the door was closed, both Peter and Simon hardly dared to breathe. The long desired moment had arrived, and if their absence should not be discovered within an hour, then the hope of escaping from the prison-ship would be bright indeed. They could hear the noise of the mob outside, but in a few minutes this ceased, and comparative silence was restored. The five men were pressed so close together that no one could even move his arms. They could almost hear their heart-beats as they waited. No one could see his companions’ faces, but each knew how the others felt. The air was soon almost stifling, and the cramped position became almost unbearable.

After the prisoners had been secured below, it was the custom of the ship's mate every night to make the rounds of the deck and examine all suspicious places to make sure that no one was lurking on deck.

For several nights of late this had been mostly a form, however, and to that fact the men in the round house had been trusting. No one had any means of estimating the passing of the time, and as the seconds seemed like minutes they might have made their concerted rush from their hiding-place too soon. Fearful of this, Simon, who had assumed the leadership of the band, whispered to his companions to be patient and wait until he should give the signal. But even the patience of the desperate young sailor was to be without its reward that night, and the familiar proverb that all things come to him who waits was soon to be proved false, for one time at least.

All unbeknown to them, another prisoner had also selected that same night as the one when he too would attempt to escape from the "durance vile" of the Jersey. This man was an Irishman of huge size, but of little wit, and had frequently been made the butt of his companions in misery. On this particular night he had made his way into the

coal-hole, and though he buried his face in the coal, he had left his feet and shoulders so fully exposed that even in the darkness they could hardly be expected to escape the notice of any one making the rounds of the ship.

At all events they did not escape the keen eyes of the mate, for as he peered into the hole, he discovered something suspiciously light-colored in the midst of the darkness, and a closer inspection at once revealed the unlucky Irishman, who was forthwith dragged from his hiding-place and made to take his stand on deck, as sorry a spectacle as any one could well imagine. Begrimed with the stains of the coal, bare-headed and forlorn, he was truly an object of pity as the angry mate showered him with blows and demanded to know whether any others were concealed in his hiding-place.

“Bedad, and yez have me,” replied the Irishman woefully.

“Of course I have you,” shouted the angry mate, “and I’ll have your friends, too.”

“Me frinds? If yez’ll be after showin’ me one, it’s happy Oi’ll be. Niver a bit of wan have Oi seen since Oi put me foot on this ould ‘hell afloat.’ Maybe yez be the man what’ll befrind me now.”

“Yes, I’ll be your friend. I’ll see to it that you have every attention. Here, look to this man!” called the mate to the guard.

The prisoner was at once turned over to two of them, and then the others were ordered to enter the coal-hole and discover whether any more were concealed there.

The confusion on board had increased so much by this time that the men in the round house could hear all that was said, and it is needless to state that their alarm was great. That a thorough search would be made they knew at once, and what to do became the all-important question. No one had spoken, however, and their thoughts were all concentrated upon what was going on outside. The search in the coal-hole had evidently been fruitless; but they could hear the mate, as in his anger he shouted:—

“I’ll search every rat-hole in the old tub to-night.”

His orders were speedily obeyed, and with a sinking heart Peter at last heard the men as they approached the round house and took their stand just outside the door.

“Give me the key to this place!” they heard the mate shout to one of the soldiers.

“There is n’t any use in searching that,”

the soldier replied. "The door is kept locked day and night. No one could get in there, unless he crawled through the key-hole."

For a moment the hopes of the prisoners returned, but they were dashed a moment later when the mate replied, "Give me the key, I tell you! Some of the rebels are almost thin enough to crawl through the key-hole. I tell you, I'm going to search every hole and corner to-night before I turn in."

"I have n't any key," said the soldier.

"Then go down to the cabin and get one!" demanded the mate sharply. "Be lively about it, too; for we've wasted too much time already."

The last hope of the prisoners had now departed. The stifling air, the crowded quarters, the suspense, and now the keen disappointment all combined to increase their wretchedness. Added to these things was the knowledge that a dozen armed soldiers were just outside the door, and doubtless every one of them was holding a cutlass in his hand. From the tones of the mate's voice they realized that he was intoxicated, and as he held a pistol in each hand it was likely to fare ill with the men when they should be discovered in their place of concealment.



“Where’s that lubber gone?” they heard the mate roar. “If he does n’t hurry up I’ll fire into the round house and make the fellows in there dance a horn-pipe, if any one happens to be there.”

As the sides of the round house were made of thin boards, the threat greatly increased the alarm of those who were within, and Simon whispered: “Boys, our only chance will be to make a rush on them. Just as soon as they try to open the door, follow me and break through them. Use your fists, your feet, your heads, anything and everything, only don’t stop, or you’re done for!”

“Where shall we go? To the rail?” whispered one.

“No, no. Make a rush for the quarter-deck.”

“What’ll we do there?”

“Time enough when we get there to decide on that. Are you all agreed to follow me?”

“Yes, yes,” whispered the men.

“Remember what I tell you, then. Make a rush all together and strike out on every side. ’Tis our only hope. Run for the quarter-deck. Here comes the soldier with the key,” added Simon quickly.

“Ho! Got the key at last, have you?”

growled the mate. "Well, then, open up the door, and we'll see whether we've anything here or not. Wait a bit," he added, "and I'll give 'em one more chance. Ho, you rebels in the round house! Will you come out peaceable, and give yourselves up, or shall I have the fun of stringing you up on the yard-arms?"

As he waited a moment for a response one of the prisoners made a movement as if he was about to open the door, but Simon instantly grasped his arm and whispered, "No, no. Go with the rest of us. 'T is your only chance."

"Unlock the door!" roared the mate. "Stand ready, men, to give 'em a dose of lead, if they don't give themselves up."

The soldier advanced with the key in his hand, but before he could apply it to the lock the men within rendered that action useless. Forming themselves into a solid body they suddenly pushed back the door, which opened outward, and with a shout that woke the slumbering echoes of the Wallabout rushed upon the startled guard. Simon's advice to use their fists and feet was not unheeded, and before the astonished soldiers could recover from their surprise they were rolled over

upon the deck and were falling one upon another in the dim light. Peter was the last to leave the round house, and though he struggled as bravely as any of his comrades he nevertheless received the blow of one of the cutlasses upon his shoulder, and was instantly aware that he had been severely wounded.

There was no time given, however, to consider his wound or even to stop and gaze upon the prostrate guard. Perhaps under other circumstances he might have laughed at the sight. The fallen soldiers, hardly aware of what had occurred, as they found themselves bowled over upon the deck, began too to strike out in every direction, though they were unable to see whether it was friend or foe they were attacking. The blows were as vigorously returned, and many a man, securing a firm grasp upon the hair of the man nearest him, held on with a grim determination that gave no heed to the responses he received. Over and over upon the deck the prostrate men rolled, shouting, swearing, striking out with feet and hands in every direction, and above all rose the voice of the angry mate, who seemed to be unable to understand fully what it was that had befallen his men.

Meanwhile the prisoners, taking advantage of the confusion, had rushed to the quarter-deck, where they took their stand, and tremblingly awaited the outcome of the confusion. Nor had they long to wait. In a brief time the guard, recovering from their surprise, and perceiving what had become of the prisoners, seized their guns and started toward the quarter-deck.

The uproar, however, by this time had been heard by all on board the Jersey. From the hold came the hoarse shouts of the men imprisoned there. From the cabin came forth the captain, followed by his wife, and it was to her that the prisoners owed their lives. As she perceived what was taking place, she ran swiftly in front of the guard, and then facing them, with her back to the five prisoners, she sharply ordered them not to advance or to fire at the unprotected men. She threatened and begged, and then implored her husband to listen to her entreaties, and at last the captain ordered the guard back, and the lives of the wretched men were spared for the time being.

They were not to escape without any punishment for their boldness, however, for they were at once put in irons. Their feet were

then fastened to a long bar, and in that condition they were to be left on the quarter-deck for the night.

Meanwhile, the hiding place of poor Putnam underneath the tub was discovered by one of the soldiers, who brutally thrust his bayonet into the unfortunate man. Whether the wound was fatal or not, Peter never knew ; but Putnam was not sent to join them, and not one of the five ever looked upon his face again.

Quiet at last was restored, and all save the guard retired from the deck, the five prisoners being left in the position in which they had been placed. The twinkling stars came forth in the sky, the biting winds began to blow, the waves rippled against the sides of the hulk, and the shadows on the shore became darker and dimmer. Yet all through the hours of the night, Peter and Simon with their three companions were held in this cramped position, and no relief came until the faint streaks of the dawn appeared in the eastern sky.

## CHAPTER XXI

### GATHERING CLOUDS

As John Russell led the way toward the place where he suspected that White was, the actions of Moses became more and more peculiar. At times he seemed to be on the point of darting into the woods and leaving the band, but the quiet word of his master each time served to restrain him.

The ground, as has been said, was covered with a light fall of snow, and through the leafless trees the men could see a considerable distance in advance of them. Rabbits came forth from their holes in the ground and stared at the advancing band for a moment, and then darted into the woods, only to turn sharply about and again gaze at the intruders. High overhead the crows were calling, and seemed to have gathered in numbers at a spot not far in advance of the patriots. The silence of the great forest, the tall trees swaying slightly before the gentle breeze, the wide stretches of land which appeared on every



side, and the peril of meeting such a force as White might have with him, all combined to make both Captain Huddy and John Russell cautious and watchful; but the young sergeant did not for a moment relax his vigilance in keeping Moses walking by the side of his horse.

“I don’ tole yo’,” spoke up Moses at last, “that yo’ come in de wrong d’rection. Yo’ go back now to de odder way?” Moses spoke in a loud tone, and his words were almost startling, but John just then caught a glimpse of Cæsar nodding his head eagerly, and at once knew that they had arrived near the spot where the faithful black believed the Tory to be. Whether he was there or not remained to be determined.

Above the tree-tops a light curl of smoke could be seen rising off to their left, and pausing abruptly John motioned for Captain Huddy to come to his side. A brief whispered consultation followed, the result of which was that both the men leaped from their saddles, and leading their horses by the bridles advanced slowly and more cautiously. Even the sound of their footfalls seemed to alarm the young leader, and again and again he warned his companions to proceed with

increased caution. As yet not a sign of the man they were seeking had been discovered, but suddenly they heard the bushes snapping before them, and distinctly perceived the form of a man darting into the woods not far away.

Calling two of his comrades to pursue the man, John with the others rushed swiftly forward, and in a moment came upon the place where it was evident the Tory had recently been. A fire was burning in a rude fireplace, a hoe-cake on a flat board was resting over the flames, and the footprints in the snow clearly indicated the recent presence of some one, who evidently had been interrupted in his preparations for the meal.

Instantly the party stopped and gazed about them, but not a man could anywhere be discovered. The crackling flames leaped higher, the rising smoke rolled back into their eyes, almost blinding them for the moment, but the sturdy captain was not to be turned from the immediate purpose in his mind.

“He’s been here, and all alone,” he said sharply. “Take after him, men! he can’t be far away. You stay here and watch,” he added sharply to John, and then turned and swiftly followed his men as they started into the woods.

"Here, Moses, you stay here," said John sharply, as the black man prepared to follow the others.

"Yas, sah; yas, sah, Massa John; I des gwine ter do dat."

John made no reply, but stood listening intently, striving to hear something from the men, who had now disappeared from sight. The silence had returned, and nothing but the burning branches of which White had made his fire could be heard. Uneasy though Moses was he made no further attempt to get away, and began to feed the fire, a proceeding which John did not interrupt.

The moments slowly passed, but the stillness was unbroken. A crow, rendered somewhat bolder than his fellows by the failure of the party to heed their presence, came and perched on the dead limb of a nearby tree, and sent forth his harsh assurance that it was other game than birds the armed men were seeking. John waited impatiently, but for a half hour not a sound was heard which would indicate that men were anywhere to be found in the great forest. At length, however, he perceived Captain Huddy returning, and soon after the others appeared, but it was not needful for any to speak, for the failure of all was apparent in their dejected manner.

“He’s slipped us again,” said Captain Huddy quietly. “We’ve nothing left but to go back home. We’re wiser if we are sadder men than when we came.”

Discouraged as John Russell was by the failure to capture the Tory, he nevertheless agreed with the stalwart captain, and the little party at once began to make their way back to his house. Moses did not speak during the march, and failed to observe the keen glances which his young master occasionally gave him. However, when they rode up in front of the house the black was unprepared for the word which John spoke.

“Captain Huddy, I want you to take Moses with you and shut him up in the county jail.”

“Yes?” said the captain inquiringly, as if he did not comprehend what it was the young sergeant desired.

“We don’t want him around here,” resumed John. “I’ve waited to give him a chance to show that he could be trusted again, but it’s no use. He’ll be where he can’t do any harm if you put him in the jail.”

“Massa John, Massa John,” said Moses eagerly, his dark face trembling with fear, “don’ do dat. I stay right by yo’. Yas

sah, yo' nebber hab any fault ter fin' wid Moses any mo'. Don' do dat, Massa John ! Don' do dat."

John, however, was deaf to the appeals, and Moses was compelled to go with Captain Huddy and his men ; and a few days afterwards his master heard of him as an inmate of the old jail. So thoroughly satisfied in his own mind was John Russell of his slave's treachery that he was convinced that the only safe course was to place Moses where he could no longer have any dealings with the traitors.

How wise his measures were became apparent a few weeks later, when the startled people of the region learned one morning that in the preceding night White and a few of his companions had entered the jail, and making their way to the bedroom of the jailor had demanded the keys of the building. The frightened man quickly gave them up, despite the boasts he had frequently made as to what he would do if such an event should occur as that which really took place. It was his wife who unloyally afterwards, in describing the scene, declared that "poor Jemmy trembled like a leaf, and handed over the keys without a word." At all events, whether the unduti-

ful spouse spoke truly or not, White obtained the keys, and speedily setting free those of the prisoners whom he chose, among them the black man Moses, marshaled his men in front of the old building, and after calling upon his followers to give three cheers for King George, which we may be sure were given lustily and with a will, declared a general jail delivery, and then speedily departed.

The anger and alarm of John Russell when he heard of the success of the daring attempt were keen, and for a time his fears that his house would again be attacked were great. White, he knew, would be more vindictive than ever, and what Moses might be able to do among the slaves was not a slight cause of anxiety. But the long weeks passed and no attack was made, and the household gradually settled back into its former habit of living.

To John himself, however, the passing weeks did not bring much improvement. His wound had been slow to heal, and his strength did not return in sufficient measure to enable him to resume his duties in the camp. Perhaps the delight of the other members of the family at his continued presence in the home was not unnatural, for in those days no lonely home was safe ; but if he had been well



enough to go Hester would never have interposed an objection.

The fears which Captain Walton had expressed as to the feeling among some of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey troops had been well founded, for one morning at a preconcerted signal the whole line except a part of three regiments had paraded under arms without their officers, marched to the magazines, supplied themselves with provisions and ammunition, and then seizing six field pieces had taken horses from General Wayne's stable to transport them. When the officers hastily collected the men who had not revolted, and tried to restore order, the mutineers fired upon them and killed one officer and wounded several others, and further commanded the opposing party to come over to them or they would be bayoneted. The order was obeyed.

General Wayne, who was in command of the Pennsylvania troops, then tried to use his influence with the men to induce them to return to their duty. When they refused to listen, and the angry general drew his pistol, they instantly presented their bayonets to his breast, and said: "We respect and love you; often have you led us into the field of battle, but we are no longer under your command;

we warn you to be on your guard ; if you fire your pistols, or attempt to enforce your commands, we shall put you instantly to death."

To General Wayne's entreaties and expostulations they were deaf. They assured him of their love, but declared they had been imposed upon beyond the power of men to endure, and soon afterwards began their march from camp.

On the third day, when they had arrived at Princeton, by the request of "Mad Anthony," they sent him a committee of sergeants, who formally stated the demands of the angry men as follows : —

- (1) A discharge of all those without exception who had served three years under their original engagements, and had not received the increased bounty and reënlisted for the war.

- (2) An immediate payment of all their arrears of pay and clothing, both to those who should be discharged and those who should remain.

- (3) The residue of their bounty, to put them on an equal footing with those recently enlisted, and future substantial pay to those who should remain in the service.

To these demands General Wayne did not feel that he had the authority to reply, but word had been sent to Washington, who was then near the Hudson, and he at once called a council of his officers. Five battalions were ordered to be in readiness to march at once to subdue the revolvers if necessary. There was great fear that the revolt would spread to other regiments, and all knew that something must be done and at once. A committee was appointed by Congress to confer with the authorities of Pennsylvania, and as a result a commission was named to take all the elements of the problem into consideration.

The result was largely favorable to the men, though as we now know this was a mistake. For the men it may be said that they were cold, wretched, hungry, and almost in despair; but if they had only been able to look a little way ahead they would have suffered the loss of their right hands before they would have done what they did. Certain it is that no one to-day is proud to trace his ancestry back to the mutinous men who so seriously threatened the success of the struggling little nation.

The particular part which enters into this story, however, was the effect of the reports of the mutiny upon the British. Sir Henry

Clinton speedily dispatched two men from New York to encourage the rebellion and to try to induce the revolting soldiers to turn their arms against their former friends.

However angry the mutineers might be themselves, still they had no mind to listen to the dastardly proposals of Sir Henry, and the consequence was that the two emissaries were turned over to the American leaders, and by them they were speedily hanged. So the rebellion against the rebellion in the end came to naught, and brought little save disgrace to those who participated in it.

For a time Sir Henry and the British leaders were not the only ones to be stirred to fresh endeavors by the report of the revolt. All along the Jersey shore the Tories and outlaws redoubled their efforts. Assured now that the end must speedily come they were resolved to put the ancient precept, "to make hay while the sun shines," to a practical test, with a result that the condition of affairs became speedily worse. Captain Huddy was doing his utmost to protect the scattered homes, but even his great efforts could not entirely avail.

He accomplished sufficient, however, to draw upon himself the increased hatred of

his enemies, which finally resulted in the movement that has made his name and memory revered throughout the region where he once lived, which he loved with a devotion as strong as life itself.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE CAPTURED LEADER

THE immediate event which at last brought upon Captain Huddy the rage of the Tories and refugees was one in which he did not have the leading part, and in fact he was only indirectly connected with the affair.

Several months after the events already described had taken place, the captain was stopping for a brief visit one morning at the house of John Russell. Although the leader was supposedly stationed at Toms River, and was in command of the little garrison at that place, he by no means confined his efforts to that locality. Wherever there was a call for his services there Captain Huddy was to be found; and on this particular morning he had set forth in response to a summons which had come from the upper part of the county, where it was reported that a band of refugees had recently landed and had driven off the cattle of a man whose patriotism had not hitherto



been considered as sufficiently keen to expose him to the danger of a raid from the enemies of the land.

The loss of his property had been sufficient to spur his flagging zeal, and now no one was more clamorous for aid or more determined to visit a just punishment upon those who had dared to molest him.

The captain and John were seated in the front room of the Russell house, and were conversing about the discouraging outlook. The faith of the warrior apparently was not dimmed, but to his younger companion his attitude was much like that of a fatalist, who now that he had entered upon the struggle was determined to fight to the end, no matter what might interpose.

The campaign of General Greene in the South had been the subject of their conversation, and the various engagements of the Cowpens, Guilford Court House, Hobkirk's Hill, and Eutaw Springs had been gone over.

"I do not see how we are to win when almost every battle is a defeat for us," John was saying. "It seems to me it can end in only one way."

"And so it can," the captain replied.

"And you think we shall win after all?"

“As surely as the sun rises in the morning. The darkness of the night only means that the day shall again appear.”

“I wish I could feel about it as you do.”

“You have not yet recovered from your wound; that is one cause of your hopelessness. But there can be no doubt about the final outcome. Is n’t our cause just? Are n’t we fighting for the right?”

“Yes, I know we are; but I see people all about us suffering, and I know that many of them never did an evil deed in their lives, or ever had an evil thought for their neighbors; and then, when I see that their goodness does n’t seem to protect them from the attacks of the Tories and outlaws, I become discouraged. May it not be that same way with the country at large? If individuals suffer when they are innocent, I do not see how you can feel so sure that even the colonies themselves may not have to go through the same experience.”

“You make a mistake. You know how it is with the breakers on the shore. One wave will come rolling in and send its waters far up the sand, and you think surely the tide is rising. Then other waves will come tumbling in, and every one of them fall short of the

first one, and you begin to think you were mistaken, and that really the tide is going out. But almost before you know it another one will send itself farther up the shore than any of the others, and you can see that you were right in the first place. Well, it's some such way with our war, I take it. The great cause is really gaining, though we can't expect every move to be of the same kind. It isn't that way with life. It's success and failure, success and failure, and you have to take a long look at times to decide whether it's really successful or not. Now with the tide you have to wait an hour or so to understand whether it's rising or falling, and we must do the same thing in our war. Just compare what we are now and what we are doing with what we were three or four years ago. There really is no comparison at all when you stop to look at the facts. No, John, the trouble with the most of us is that we take too short views. We watch our steps, and forget the journey. We look at the ground over which we are walking, and because it's sometimes rough and sometimes smooth, and then it goes up hill and then down, we think we are not gaining, and yet all the time we are really getting ahead."

Captain Huddy's eyes were closed as he spoke, and his deep voice and his solemn manner were not without their effect upon his hearer. "I'm hoping it is as you say," he said, when the captain ceased. "At all events I have no thought of giving up, and I wish I was only in a fit condition to go back and join the troops."

"You can do as much here as you could if you were in the camps," replied the captain. "At least that's the way I feel about it myself, and that's why I am still in Jersey instead of being with Washington or Greene. Some one must look out for the people themselves, and protect them from these villains who belong to neither side. Now I'll tell you what I came for."

The captain's voice and manner suddenly changed, and John at once perceived that his visitor purposely had held back the real object he had had in coming.

"What is it, Captain Huddy?" said John quietly.

"It's about White. I've had word that he and Lippencott and some of their ilk are coming down here again, for you know they've kept away from us for some time, and not without good reasons. But I've not

been deceived by their apparent neglect, and have known all the time that they were only holding back, and that when the proper time came we should hear from them again, and perhaps in a way we should not forget."

"And they are coming now?"

"Yes, I've received word that they expect to land up the shore to-morrow morning. Their plan, as I understand it, is not to come this time in a body, but in detachments, and then get together somewhere. Now I have been informed that Phil White himself, along with two others, are expecting to come to-morrow morning early and land up near Trap.<sup>1</sup> I shall not be able to be there myself, but I'll send Barrows and a half dozen others and put you in charge so that you can direct the whole affair. Do you feel strong enough to do it?"

"Yes! Yes, I do!" responded John with eagerness. "Anything to bring White to justice and place him where he can do no harm, I shall be equal to, I know. You could not do me a greater favor, Captain Huddy."

"Listen then, while I explain the details of the plan."

<sup>1</sup> This was the ancient name of Long Branch, and the spot was still so spoken of by many of the Jerseymen.

For an hour the two men sat together and eagerly talked over all the arrangements which the captain had already made. The half dozen men whom he was to provide had already gone to the appointed place to make sure that White should not escape, in case he came before the time of which the captain had been informed, though the manner in which he had received his information he did not explain even to John Russell.

As the captain at last rose to depart, John said, "I thank you, Captain Huddy, for your confidence and favor, and I shall go at once to the spot. I would be there when White appears."

"It is not needful for you to go now, John. The men are already there, but only as a precaution. I am confident White will not appear before to-morrow morning."

"I shall go now," persisted John. "Cæsar will also go with me."

"Very well. It shall be as you say," replied the captain as he mounted his horse and rode away.

John did not explain to his wife or mother the purpose he had in mind, but only stating that he would be absent from home for a day or two, and giving them directions



as to the extra precautions for safety which might be necessary during his absence, he soon summoned Cæsar ; and together they rode away to the place of which Captain Huddy had informed him.

Arriving there by the middle of the afternoon, John found the men already on guard. They had taken their places among some bushes behind one of the higher dunes and near to a little inlet where it was thought that White and his companions would land, for it was understood that he was to sail down from Sandy Hook.

The men on guard were well known to John, and soon their plans had been talked over and their arrangements all made. Two men were to stand guard all the time, one to keep watch on the sea and the other to guard against an approach from the land, though this latter event was in no wise expected by any of them.

As the sun disappeared and the darkness crept over them, the loneliness of the position began to make itself felt. There was the moaning of the ocean as if it shared in the anxiety of the watchers and feared and appreciated the danger in which they were placed. The scudding clouds would hide the light of

the moon and leave them in darkness. The head of the watchful guard would appear and almost startle them with the thought that the enemy had come. But at last the long night passed without any adventures, and with the return of the dawn their courage also came back, and every man was eager for the time to come when the treacherous Tory should appear.

Nor had they long to wait. Just as the sun appeared above the horizon, a little sail was discovered close inshore and coming directly toward them. Soon they were able to discern the three men on board, and when the little craft was run into the inlet the heart of almost every one of the watchers rejoiced when Phil White himself was discovered to be on board, though who his two companions were no one could determine. Lippencott, however, was not with him, but no one was inclined to complain, so rejoiced were they all to have White now almost within their power.

There was a moment of uncertainty before it was perceived just what White planned to do, but the problem was solved when the three men, after drawing their boat up on shore, started directly toward the dune behind

which lay John Russell and his waiting band. A whispered word from the young sergeant made every one watchful, and crouching low and holding their guns in their hands the little band waited for the three men to approach.

Apparently White was not suspicious, and though armed he was walking carelessly. One of his comrades was now recognized by the watchers as Aaron White, the younger brother of the leader, and as he was beginning to give promise of becoming as dangerous a man as Philip himself, the disappointment over the failure of Lippencott to come was in a measure relieved.

Not once did John Russell turn his eyes away from the approaching men, and just as they arrived at the foot of the dune, he beckoned to his band to rise. Instantly they all obeyed, and before the astonished Tories were fully aware of what was occurring, they found themselves covered by the guns and powerless to resist.

"You have me now, John Russell," said White coolly. "What do you intend to do, now that I am in your power?"

"I intend to disarm you first of all. Lay your guns in the sand."

As his demand was instantly complied with,

for resistance was useless in the face of such odds, John ordered one of his band to advance and secure them. When the weapons had been taken, the party approached, and after a thorough search of the prisoners had been made, they were speedily conducted to the place where the horses were in waiting. The prisoners were then ordered to mount, and at a quick pace the entire body started across the country.

To all appearances, White was taking his capture philosophically. Several times he endeavored to draw John, by whose side he was riding, into conversation, but the sergeant did not once reply. He was resolved that nothing should be said or done of which his prisoner could take any advantage, and, as he knew that White was as desperate as he was dangerous, he had resolved to do nothing but keep a constant watch upon his movements.

In this manner, mile after mile was quickly passed, and in about three hours they entered a rough road which led through a long stretch of swamp. Thick bushes and tall trees grew close to the roadside, and John increased his vigilance as he perceived what an excellent place for an escape the region was.

Apparently his prisoner was of the same

opinion, for with a sudden movement he struck John's horse, and at the same moment threw himself from the one he was riding and darted into the nearby bushes.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THWARTED

As the guard on board the Jersey summoned the prisoners from below at sunrise, the woe-begone appearance of the five men in the stocks was seen by all. No interference was offered as their companions in misery lifted Peter and Simon in their arms and carried them into the hold, where they were tenderly placed upon blankets, which were freely given up by the few fortunate owners. Peter was suffering from the wound in his shoulder, and Simon seemed to be but little better, for he was unable to stand alone, and his body was as stiff as if joints had never been known.

The careful nursing by their friends soon restored a measure of comfort, however, and the exhausted young prisoners at last fell asleep. When they awoke the pangs of hunger began to assert themselves, and as they crawled up on deck they were informed that the allowance of food for each of the



men who had attempted to escape was to be reduced one third as a penalty for their effort.

"Well, there's one consolation," said Simon glibly, "and that is we shan't have to find so large a place to hide in next time."

"If there is ever to be a next time," said Peter gloomily.

"There'll be nothing else. I think the trial we made was only a beginning. You're not ready to give up now, are you, Peter?"

"No. I feel more determined than ever, though I can't think of any way to work it. Have you thought of any plan?"

"It's too early yet to do that. How much money have you?" he added abruptly.

"I have the fifteen dollars, but you know about that. Have you any?"

"I've the same amount. Give me ten dollars."

"What for?"

"I don't just know, but for use of some kind. I may want to use it very suddenly, so you had best give it to me."

"Not here," replied Peter, as he glanced nervously about him. "Wait until we're in the hold for the night."

That same evening, after the prisoners had been secured in the hold, Peter gave to his

friend ten of the dollars which still remained in his possession ; but several weeks elapsed before Simon found a method of using them to advantage.

Meanwhile their condition had in no way been improved. The loss of even a part of their already insufficient food was telling severely upon them. Peter had become more and more silent, and his feeling of despondency was not without its effect upon his friend, though Simon endeavored to keep up an appearance of hopefulness he was far from feeling.

A slight improvement was made one day when a boat laden with butter, or, more correctly speaking, with firkins filled with grease which passed for butter among the prisoners, came alongside the Jersey. Eager for anything which would afford even a temporary relief from the monotony of the long days, several of the men volunteered their services in unloading the cargo, and among these were Peter and Simon.

Simon was the most officious of all, and as the firkins were first hoisted on board and then lowered down the main hatchway, he found many opportunities to exert himself, and his voice was the loudest as he called

upon his companions to "bestir themselves, and not keep the skipper waiting all day for his cargo to be unloaded."

His zeal may have caused his guard to relax their vigilance for a moment, but at all events, seizing a favorable opportunity, the eager young sailor deftly rolled one of the firkins forward under the forecastle, where he hastily covered it with his blanket, and at once resumed his labors without being detected in the theft, if theft it was.

At sunset the firkin was transferred to the hold, and the hungry men had such a feast as they had not known during the many months of their long imprisonment.

"It is n't much like butter," Simon remarked, "but then it helps to hold the crumbs together, and hides the inhabitants thereof."

At all events the prisoners thrived upon it as long as it lasted, and their waning strength was in a measure kept up.

"I've found a way to invest your coin," said Simon one night, as he stretched himself beside his friend.

"How's that?" inquired Peter indifferently, for in his weakness he had come to consider their condition as hopeless, and not

even the use of his little hoard had much interest for him now. There are times and places where even money fails to be of service, and to Peter the old Jersey certainly seemed to be one of those places.

“ You know Billy the Ram ? ”

“ Yes.”

Peter recognized the term as that which the prisoners had applied to one of their guards. He was a burly young Irishman, with a temper so uncertain that the only certain thing about it was its uncertainty. His huge head was surmounted by a mass of thick curly hair, and doubtless this fact, as much as his readiness to engage in any enterprise that called for the exhibition of his belligerent qualities, was the cause for the sobriquet which the prisoners had bestowed upon him.

“ Well, Billy is not averse to taking the gold.”

“ And keeping it, too, I fear,” replied Peter.

“ Let him keep it. That’s what I want him to do. I’ve given him a little twice, and now he loves me as if I was his long lost brother. He beams upon me whenever I come near him, and I think would not be averse to

hugging me in his gentle grasp, so deep is his affection for me."

"He'd probably slip his hand in your pocket at the same time. Aren't you afraid he'll tell the officers and have a search made?"

"What! after taking the money himself? No, sir! You can trust him to keep silence. He thinks he's found a good thing, and he'll try to get all there is himself. I'm no more afraid of his telling than I am that I'll go and report it to the captain myself."

"But what do you expect to get from him? I don't understand."

"Neither do I; but I am fixing him so that I can depend upon him, and when the proper time comes I'll use him. You must be ready at any moment day or night, for our chance may come when we least expect it."

"It ought to come soon then, for I don't expect anything. It seems to me that there is no more prospect of our ever getting away from this old hulk than there is of our flying."

"You wait, that's all I can say to you now."

Peter did wait, but apparently the waiting did little good. He knew that with every

passing day his strength was going. Whenever he looked into the face of Simon the ravages of his sufferings became more marked ; and if his friend, with all his courage and apparent light-heartedness, presented such a sad spectacle, what must be his own appearance, Peter thought.

The month in which they were to suffer the loss of one third of their food had passed, and the mess had now returned to its full allowance ; but even that change promised little good. Hunger, disease, and filth were producing their natural results. Gaunt faces peered at them, wasted bodies dragged themselves slowly about the deck, and to crown all the vermin in the hold seemed to thrive in direct contrast with the rapidly disappearing strength of the prisoners. The condition of the wretched men was beyond the power of words to describe, and Peter had settled into a condition of abject misery, hopeless, forlorn, and pitiable. And Peter was only like most of the unfortunate men on board the Jersey. The boats which every morning departed for the shore with their loads of the dead were looked upon by many as the only means of release from the prison-ship, and doubtless many a man eagerly welcomed that



last great change which comes to all mankind, long before it was to have been duly expected.

Simon still continued to be the one exception in the mess. The lower the spirits of the others fell, just so much the higher did Simon's spirits seem to rise. Nothing could daunt him, no hunger overmaster him, and even the ever-increasing gloom among the prisoners only served to make him the more determined to escape from the place.

"Keep up your heart, Peter," he would say every night. "Everything comes to an end sometime, and this thing will have to stop some day. You must not forget that you must be ready for our chance when it comes, and it may come any day, you know."

It had come to pass that Peter seldom replied now. He had heard the same words spoken so many times that they no longer appealed to him. The thing he once had called his heart seemed to be dead. A feeling of hopeless and complete misery had almost possessed him, and he had come to be among those who were even looking forward to the last sad trip in the boats to the shore as the only means of release.

Several more weeks passed in this manner, and Peter never inquired now as to Simon's

dealings with "Billy the Ram." Indeed he seldom thought of the Irishman, and the little money remaining seemed so utterly useless that he cared little whether he kept it or not.

"Billy's our guard this morning," said Simon one day, when he and Peter were standing together on deck near the rail.

Peter turned for a moment and looked at the soldier, but the sight apparently was of slight interest to him. He glanced about the deck, but wherever he looked he could see only pale and despairing men, clad in rags, covered with filth, and presenting an appearance of wretchedness worse even than that which he had known months before, a fact which at that time he would have deemed impossible.

As the young prisoner's glance returned to his companion he discovered Simon regarding him with an expression of deep sympathy upon his face, but he was too indifferent now even to be moved by an attitude which his friend had hitherto attempted to conceal.

"There comes a boat," said Simon at last, pointing toward the city, and speaking, not so much because the sight was a novel one as because he wished to do anything which would take Peter's thoughts from himself.

Peter turned and glanced indifferently at the approaching boat, but its beautiful appearance and the manner in which it was handled served to interest him for the moment. It was a yawl with a crew of four men and with several others on board. Doubtless they were visitors, and had come, as had many before them, to see the strange sights on the Jersey for themselves, for a certain morbid interest in the sight of misery was not unknown then, as it is not even in our own days.

The approach of the yawl soon produced a feeling of interest on board the prison-ship, for the ship's side was manned, and as the visiting boat came alongside, the usual naval courtesies were extended. The visitors were soon received on board, and the crew of the yawl made fast their boat to the fore-chains on the larboard side of the ship, and then they themselves ascended to the deck.

"Peter! Peter!" whispered Simon excitedly, "this is our chance."

As Peter made no reply, though he turned quickly as his friend spoke, Simon continued, "You get our mess together and I'll attend to Billy the Ram. We can drop into that yawl if I can keep him away a few minutes, and we'll take our chance of getting to the shore.

Be careful, but get the men together right away."

Peter was ready for action now, and though he was trembling in his excitement he slowly and with apparent indifference sought out the other men of their mess, and soon they were standing together directly above the beautiful yawl which lay so temptingly near them.

Simon meanwhile had spoken to Billy the Ram, and was seen to shake him with great apparent friendliness by the hand. Peter knew what was in the hand-shake, but he was too eager now to devote much thought to that.

Simon sauntered back to the place where his companions were waiting, and with a whispered word bade them wait a moment longer. Billy was now approaching, and everything seemed to hinge upon his actions. Slowly the guard drew near, but he did not appear to notice the group. He turned about and with increased deliberation started toward the stern.

"Now, then! Be quick!" whispered Simon.

Instantly one of the men grasped the rope and slid into the yawl below. Another and another followed. Then Peter stepped forward, but before he could follow the man in

advance pushed him roughly backward, and the lad fell to the deck. Simon, who was about to follow, instantly turned to the assistance of his friend, but before he could grasp the rope the men in the yawl had cut themselves loose and already with desperate strokes were pulling for the shore.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### SIMON'S RECRUITS

FOR a brief time both Peter and Simon were hardly able to understand what had happened. Peter rose to his feet, and as his friend said soothingly, "Never mind, lad; better luck next time," he glanced at the departing boat, and then at Billy the Ram, who apparently had not discovered the departure of the yawl; and then the bitter truth came home to him.

In their anxiety to escape the other members of the mess had brutally deserted them, and in the selfishness of desperation had seized the opportunity which, without Simon's shrewdness and Peter's coin, would never have been theirs. Peter was almost too dazed to realize the sacrifice of his friend, who, rather than desert his comrade, had given up the chance which he might easily have used, and had remained on the deck of the detested prison-ship. Truly the heroes are not always those who have had their deeds chronicled, and



many a man has been the only one aware of the price he himself has paid for his loyalty to friend or for his devotion to truth. But their nobility has been as great as if the pens of others beside the recording angel had written of their deeds.

The guard by this time had turned to retrace his way, and the sight of the departing yawl could no longer be disregarded. Billy stopped for a moment, gazed in apparent astonishment at the boat, which was making most excellent time, we may be sure, and then, glancing keenly about him, raised his gun to his shoulder and fired at the men.

Perhaps his excitement destroyed the accuracy of his aim, or it may have been that he was a poor marksman anyway; but at all events the bullet went wide of its mark, and the report made the desperate men redouble their efforts, already to all appearances putting forth exertions that would hardly have been expected of the emaciated and weak prisoners on board the Jersey

The discharge of Billy's gun, however, speedily brought all the guard from below, and in a moment they too were blazing away at the departing boat; but it was by this time too far away to present an easy mark, and

their efforts only served to increase the confusion. The prisoners on the deck were now excited beholders of the contest, and the rage of the captain, who had come forth from the cabin at the call of the guard, only added to their delight.

The yawl was soon near the shore, and as it became apparent that the escaping men would land before they could be overtaken, and as it was also seen that they had not suffered from the shots of the guard, the prisoners plainly showed their delight at the success of their recent companions.

Even Simon, in spite of the keenness of his disappointment, seemed to be as interested a spectator as any, and as he perceived that the bold attempt was about to succeed he swung the remains of his tattered hat and shouted, "Three cheers for the yawl! Give 'em three times three, men!"

The cheers were given with a will and a heartiness that were in marked contrast to the sad silence that was usually on board the ship; but though it seemed to delight those whose feeble voices joined in the shouts it only made the rage of the captain more intense. Savagely he ordered all the prisoners below; but as they turned to obey, the sight of the

yawl grounding upon the nearest shore indicated that their comrades thus far had succeeded in their attempt; and once more the cheers rang out, which was probably the one time in all the sad history of the war when the forlorn men on the Jersey ever cheered when they started for the filthy hold of the vile old prison-ship.

As the men who had seized the yawl were not heard of again it was concluded that they had been successful, and for a time their departure helped to inspire a kindred hope in the minds of those who were left; but when a few days had elapsed the gloom and despondency returned, and the most of the men were even more hopeless than before.

Peter Van Mater, however, was not of this number, greatly to the delight of his energetic friend Simon. The very fact that escape was possible, and that some had actually succeeded in making their way to the shore, seemed to rouse him to a renewed hope. Every night he and Simon talked over various plans; but though they did not find it possible to execute any of them, it was at least a relief to talk of them, and the number of schemes they devised but failed to carry out would almost fill a book of themselves.

As the slow weeks passed, and the condition of the prisoners became steadily worse, at last it was decided to draw up a memorial or petition and send it to General Washington, begging of him to come to their relief, or to devise some means by which their condition might be improved. Consent to send the petition was readily obtained, and for a time the hopes of the unfortunate men were higher; but at last word came from the great commander that he was powerless to aid them, though his heart ached in sympathy for them in their misery.

This did not mean, however, that he made no attempt. He wrote the commander of the British forces calling his attention to the sad plight of the prisoners on the Jersey, and even threatening to retaliate upon the British prisoners he himself held if nothing was done. For a brief time there was an improvement in the food and condition, but matters soon resumed their former condition, and the suffering and despair were as pronounced as ever they had been.

Two reasons are to be found for this. One was that doubtless the British leaders were not fully aware of the actual state of affairs on board the Jersey. Howe was an easy-

going man, generous and kind-hearted, but the very good nature which made him popular with his own men doubtless also made him somewhat indifferent or unbelieving as to many of the reports, and in his self-satisfied confidence that everything somehow was bound to turn out right in the end, he never exerted himself to learn the truth, especially when it promised to be somewhat disagreeable or different from that which he wished to believe. Clinton was, however, a man of an entirely different make-up; but it is doubtful whether even he at the time fully understood just what the true state of affairs actually was.

The other cause was to be found in the general feeling toward the "rebels." The rulers in England were continually crying out for their generals and armies to bring the "rebellion" to a speedy end; but somehow those obstinate "rebels" refused to yield, and to all appearances were as determined as ever to have a country which none should rule but themselves. Naturally, as the war continued and the end seemed as far away as it had at the beginning, the anger and bitterness steadily increased, and the fact that some of the "rebels" were suffering for

their obstinacy was not of itself likely to incite much pity in the hearts of those who believed themselves to be the natural rulers of the new land. Of course this condition of affairs was no excuse for the treatment of the wretched men confined in the hold of the prison-ship, but in a measure it explains to us the sources of the trouble.

Another fact which is oftentimes forgotten was that the prisoners whom the Yankee men-of-war or privateers captured were as a rule willing to enlist in the service of the new nation, and thereby regain a measure of freedom for themselves. As a consequence there were not many men who could be offered in exchange for the prisoners among the British ; and as these latter were for the most part weakened by want and disease, they were in no condition to enter into service again, and the condition of the struggling little American army was such that it in no way felt able to provide for the wants of those who might only be an incumbrance and not a help.

The patriotism and patient endurance of the forgotten and humble men who were sent to the Jersey by their captors became therefore the more marvelous. The price they paid, the sufferings of those unknown men,



their spirit and cheer, are consequently the more heroic ; and though the names of many of them may never be known, their long suffering was not the least of the heroic elements that entered into the life of the new nation.

And their patriotism was soon put to a severe test. Not long after the escape of the men in the yawl it came to pass that recruiting officers of the British frequently came on board the Jersey seeking for men to fill their incomplete regiments. The prisoners would be formed in line on deck, and compelled to march past the examiners, who would select some of the most promising and carry them away without waiting for the formality of securing their consent. Simon was so unfortunate as to be selected at one time when about three hundred men were chosen in the manner described ; but his ready trick with his fingers and wrists, which already had served him well on one occasion, as we know, now stood him in good service, and, as much to Peter's delight as his own, he was released.

The visits of these recruiting officers continued, though for the most part they now assembled the men, and after haranguing them, urged them to enlist in the service of the king, and abandon a cause already as

good as lost. Some of the hopeless, despairing, desperate prisoners yielded to the appeal, though, to their credit be it said, the most of the men refused to listen, evidently responding to the spirit, if not to the words, of the eloquent young Patrick Henry, and if liberty could not be had, at least death could be their portion.

The condition of the hold in the Jersey became steadily worse. The increasing numbers of the prisoners made cleanliness almost out of the question. Almost the only creatures who could be said to thrive in the midst of such conditions were the vermin, and they certainly multiplied as few creatures of the earth could do.

At last, as a means of varying the monotony, as well as for self-protection, Simon procured a huge snuff-box which one of the prisoners had contrived to keep, and soon this was filled with the victims the men secured from their own persons and from others. The "Little Jersey," it was called, and the sight of its contents was one that under other circumstances would have filled its beholders with loathing and disgust. As it was, it served as a mild relief. One morning Simon was holding the snuff-box in his

hands, calling upon his comrades for their morning contributions, when he was surprised by the entrance of a man whom he at once knew to be one of the detested recruiting officers. The visitor evidently was an Irishman, vain of his showy uniform, pompous in his manner, and plainly felt the condescension he was showing in urging the prisoners to enlist.

“’T is a great privilege, it is that,” he said, as he brought his plea to an end. “Jist think of it, me byes. ’T is enough to ate, yez well have ; an’ as fur the clothes, jist look at mesilf, will yez? Yez ’ll be dressed as foine as iver Oi am, ivery bit. It’s good rations Oi’m after offerin’ yez, it’s a gloorious sarvice, an’ all the gurls of Ameriky will be peekin’ out from de windows to see yez march past ’em in yer foine new togs.”

“Would you take one of us?” inquired Simon solemnly.

“Ivery one of yez, me darlint,” exclaimed the delighted Irishman. “In coorse some of yez would n’t be of much use to de king ; but Oi’ll take yez, ivery one o’ yez, if yez ’ll be after spakin’ the word.”

“There are some poor creatures here that would be glad to go with you, I am sure,”

said Simon, glancing at his snuff-box as he spoke.

“ Oi ’ll take ivery cratur’ in this hold.”

“ Every one ? ”

“ Yis, sir ; that ’s what Oi ’m after tellin’ yez.”

“ And you ’ll be sure and give them all the rations they want ? ”

“ They ’ll be that fot, they ’ll have to waddle like a duck.”

“ How long before you ’ll feed them ? ”

“ Jist as soon as they have joined me. Ploom pudden ’ll be no whare, me byes. Come on, ivery one o’ yez. It ’s the place for yez. It ’s whare yez belong.”

“ You rascally Irishman, what do you mean ? What do you mean by coming down here and trying to tempt these poor half-starved men to be false to their country ? These are the creatures you can feed, and they belong to you, too.” And as Simon spoke he opened the snuff-box and flung the contents over the head and shoulders of the startled recruiting officer.

It was not a brilliant trick. It did not even have the novelty of freshness, but Simon’s indignation was thoroughly aroused at the attempt to turn the wretched men away

from their loyalty to the country, and besides, as he afterwards declared, the man had begged for the creatures, "ivery one," and had promised "to be kind to them, and feed them well, ivery one."

The shout which arose from the prisoners instantly showed the visitor that something was wrong, and besides he was aware of the presence of the "creatures" on his own person. The light was too dim to enable him to see clearly just what had befallen him, or even to recognize the face of the one who had done the deed.

Without waiting to make further investigations, and with a yell that was heard throughout the ship, the man nimbly made his way to the deck, with Simon and others in close pursuit, resolved to learn what the result would be.

"Hoot, mon, wha' is the matter with yer bock?"

Simon recognized the voice of the Scotch captain of the Jersey, and the ringing cheer which at that moment was given by the prisoners who happened to be on deck only increased his eagerness. Calling to his companions to follow, he led the way to the deck with a large body of the men from below close at his heels.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE FATE OF THE TORY

WATCHFUL as John Russell had been, the action of his prisoner nevertheless took him by surprise, and by the time he had secured control of his frightened horse again, White had gone a considerable distance into the woods.

"Take after him, Borden! Catch him, North!" shouted the young sergeant. "Don't let him get away! Stop, White! Stop or we'll shoot!"

As the fleeing man made no response, John shouted again, "Stop! Stop, Phil White, or you're a dead man!"

Still the Tory did not falter, and the guard at John's bidding raised their guns and fired together. White dropped to the ground, but instantly leaping to his feet darted ahead once more with increased speed. Evidently he had been wounded, but not sufficiently to prevent him from continuing his flight.

John Russell was in no condition for a pursuit or even for a close struggle. His old



wound, though in a measure healed, still prevented him from indulging in any unusual exertion ; and realizing his own helplessness, the young sergeant was almost desperate. To have secured the Tory and then to lose him again, just at the time when he was picturing to himself the joy that would come to the people of Old Monmouth when they should learn that the man so greatly feared by them all was in custody, served to increase his mortification.

His followers, however, were quick to respond to his appeal. Samuel North drove his spurs into the horse he was riding, and leaping the fence rode swiftly in advance of the Tory to cut off his flight into the woods on that side. Borden turned to the other side to catch the man if he should run in that direction, and John remained in the road to be ready in case the desperate Tory should turn about in his flight and once more seek the highway.

It had all occurred in such a brief space of time that, almost before John realized what was going on, he could hear the men rushing through the woods, and the fallen limbs of the trees and the bushes as they snapped beneath the feet of the horses. It seemed to

him as if they were everywhere at the same time; and the shouts of the men, the frantic leaps of the terrified horses, the loud beatings of his own heart, all increased the confusion.

John could see that White had turned sharply about as he perceived the course which North was following, and instead of making for the woods now, he was running toward a near-by swamp. If he should once gain that he might still escape, for no horse could follow him in the deep soft mud, and he might find some place of concealment which no one would discover.

North, however, had also turned now, and John could see in the occasional glimpses he obtained through the open spaces between the trees that he was close upon the fugitive.

“White, if you will give yourself up, you shall have quarter yet,” North repeatedly shouted, but his words were every time unheeded.

The Tory had almost gained the bog now, and John groaned aloud as he thought the man was about to escape after all. But North, quickly drawing his sword, leaped from the back of his horse, and on foot swiftly pursued the fleeing man. Nearer and nearer he came, still calling upon White to give himself up

and avoid the result which otherwise must surely come, but still the desperate man refused. The determined North was now close upon him, and, as he perceived that the end was about to come, John Russell groaned and placed his hand before his eyes. Soldier though he was, the sight was more than he could endure.

In a few minutes North returned to the roadside leading his horse by the bridle. The other two prisoners had been safely guarded by the remaining members of the band, and as they saw North's face they knew, as well as did John Russell, that the end of the pursuit had been gained.

"Is he dead?" inquired John in a low voice.

"Yes, he's dead."

"At least we tried to save his life," said John quietly. "His blood is upon his own head. If he had only given himself up, he'd have saved himself."

"You're right, John Russell," spoke up Aaron, the brother of Phil White. "He had no one to blame but himself. I saw and heard it all."

"Why do you suppose he refused?" inquired John anxiously.

Now that the man was dead the horror of it all swept over him in full force. Not even the fact that the fallen Tory had been one of those who had made the attack upon his father's house seemed to comfort him now. In all honesty of purpose the young sergeant had tried to capture the man, and have him placed where he could no longer plot and plan against the men who once had been his friends and neighbors. The full sense of the horror of war, its brutality and cruelty, swept over him as never it had before, not even when his own father had fallen a victim to the evil men who had seized the opportunity to work out their own selfish and wicked designs. For the loss which had come to his own home he had not been responsible. Keen as was his grief, he still had known that vengeance had not belonged to him; and, as he frequently declared, he would much prefer to suffer wrong than do it. In the present case the responsibility could not be shaken off, and he knew that White had fallen as a result of his own plans.

"Phil brought it on himself," said Aaron again, gruffly. "He had good reasons for not wanting you to take him to the Court House."

"What do you mean?" inquired John.

“He knew, Phil did, that if he was lodged in the jail there, he ’d have to stand trial for what happened to your father, John Russell. And I ’m thinkin’ Phil thought he ’d rather take his chances here than there.”

John made no reply, and at once directed his men to prepare a litter on which the body of the fallen Tory should be taken to Monmouth Court House. This was speedily done, and about an hour afterward the little band rode into the hamlet bringing their prisoners with them and also the body of the once desperate Tory.

All of these were speedily disposed of, and as John prepared to depart he discovered Captain Huddy himself near the old jail. In a few words he related the story of the capture and fall of White, and then said, “I must go home now, Captain Huddy. This has been a sad day’s work for all concerned.”

“Nay, not so,” responded the captain sturdily. “’Tis only just and fair. They that take the sword must perish by the sword. It has been measured to Philip White with the same mete whereby he himself has measured to others. You did your duty, no more, no less.”

“Yes, I know that’s so, or rather I sup-

pose it's so ; but it does n't detract from the fact that a man has fallen and I have been the cause of it."

"Say not the cause, but the means, John Russell. Philip White's days were numbered, and it was high time for his wickedness to cease. You were merely the scourge, the whip of the Almighty. Just as soon as these men are willing to end this unrighteous war, they shall have peace, *and never before*; it matters not who falls nor how many. They have no one to blame but themselves. I am told," he added quietly, "that Aaron White does not blame you, nor does he find fault with John North, who gave the thrust that laid Phil White low. It is rather upon me that he declares vengeance shall fall."

"You! You, Captain Huddy? I do not see how it concerns you."

"Aaron White declares, so I am informed, that Lippencott was in this expedition, and that he has said time and again that were it not for me the Tories of Old Monmouth would have peace. And now that Philip White has fallen by the sword, Lippencott will be more zealous than ever to rid the land of its defender. At least I am so informed Lippencott has expressed himself. I know



not whether it be true or not. Either way it matters little, for I shall continue as I have begun. It is to be a struggle to the end, John Russell. To the end! To the end!"

Captain Huddy's strong face took on an expression such as John had never seen before on the face of any man. Had he not known so well the sturdy captain, he would almost have thought him a man beside himself.

"I know what are your thoughts, John," said the captain quietly, as he glanced at the face of his friend. "You, like others, consider me a fanatic. It is true. The zeal of my house hath eaten me up. I know naught and care for naught now but to redeem this land from the hand of the spoiler. If the arch Tory Lippencott regards me as worthy of his especial attention he shall find me not unready. Though my times are not in my hands, yet still am I not unmindful of them."

As he rode slowly homeward that day John Russell could not free himself from the conviction that Captain Huddy believed that the time of his service was near its end. The stern old warrior, almost a fanatic, as he himself had declared, in his zeal for the cause of the patriots, had always seemed to the young

soldier not like any other man he had ever known. The very tones of his voice were impressive. His convictions knew never a moment of hesitation or perplexity. He was right; it was the right he was fighting for; and come what might to the rugged leader of the county militia, that would be right, too. And from the words of the latest interview John gained the impression that the captain felt that evil of some kind was threatening him as never before, though there was not a sign of flinching in his manner.

For a few weeks John could not throw off the effect. He soon was able to believe, what others told him, that his own part in the death of White was lawful, and perhaps right in a time like that in which he lived; but the forebodings of his friend were not so easily disposed of.

As the weeks passed, and no events of an especially alarming import were reported, the feeling in a measure wore away, though it did not entirely disappear. At last in the early days of the spring he resolved to go himself to Toms River, where Captain Huddy was in command, and once more see the doughty champion of the region and assure himself that all was well.

The immediate cause of his journey was the fact that Cæsar had related to him a certain mysterious report, that had somehow spread among the slaves, that Captain Lippen-cott had at last devised a measure which would surely place Captain Huddy in his power, and enable him to repay the debt which the Tory declared had been incurred by the fall of his comrade, Philip White.

It was therefore because of these vague and uncertain rumors that John had resolved to go to the little fort at Toms River and assure himself that all was well with the garrison there, and, in case he found everything as he hoped, to inform his friend of the reports and endeavor to persuade him to take extra precautions for his safety.

Accordingly he set forth on his journey early in a morning in March, and by noon-time had approached within five miles of his destination. The roads were heavy, and he had just stopped to give the horse he was riding a brief rest, when he was startled by the sound of the voice of a man in the distance. At first John thought it was some one calling for aid, and grasping his reins again he was about to push on in obedience to the summons, when he paused and listened

again more intently. This time he could hear that it was the voice of some one singing, and evidently the singer was approaching. Soon the words of the song could be distinguished : —

“ There never was night more foul and black, — there never was fiercer blast !

Oh, many a prank the winds will play ere this terrible night be past !

Be merry ; the fiends are roving now, and death is abroad on the wind,

Join hands in the Daunce, to-morrow's night full many a corse shall find.”

“ 'Tis Garrett,” said John to himself with a smile, as he checked his horse and waited for the man to approach.

His conjecture proved to be correct, for in a few minutes Garrett appeared in the road swinging the stout club he carried in his hands, and still singing with all the strength he could summon. It had been long since John had seen him, and the first sight of the man aroused in his heart a feeling of pity. Poor Garrett presented a pitiable sight. His long gray hair was matted, and his head was without a covering of any kind. His feet were bare, and his clothing hung in tatters upon his frail body. Surely it had fared ill with the innocent as well as with the guilty

in the terrible struggle, John thought, as he watched Garrett approaching.

"Why, Garrett, 't is long since I have seen you," said John cordially, as the poor man halted before him and looked up into his face with an expression such as a suffering child might have had.

"Ay, 'tis long indeed," replied Garrett plaintively. "'T is a long and a weary waiting. Have you seen Blackbeard?" he inquired anxiously.

"No, I have not seen him. Have you?"

"To my sorrow that I have. I warned Captain Huddy. I sang to him. I told him Blackbeard was surely coming, for I had seen his boats on the sea and his men on the land. But listen he would not. No, not even when I told him of the gallows-tree would he heed my words."

"What is it, Garrett? What is it? Is anything wrong at Toms River?" said John quickly, for something in Garrett's manner as well as in his words had startled him.

"Blackbeard," responded Garrett simply.

"Has he been to Toms River?"

"That he has, and all his men with him."

John waited to hear no more, but instantly sent his weary horse forward at his best gait.

Muddy roads were ignored now, and the impatient young sergeant constantly urged his steed to a swifter pace.

It was a sorry spectacle he presented when at last he rode into the little hamlet, or rather into the place where it had once been, for Toms River was only a mass of smoking ashes and ruins. The garrison post was merely a charred and blackened heap, and of all the buildings that recently had stood there only two rude houses remained. The two mills, the salt works, the storehouse, and every dwelling house, save two, were gone.

Little curls of smoke were still rising from the heaps of ashes, but not a soul could be seen, and with a heavy heart John Russell realized that once more the warning of poor Garrett's song had been received in vain.



## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE FATE OF THE PATRIOT

IN order to understand what it was that had brought to pass the sad condition of affairs upon which the startled young sergeant looked when he rode into Toms River, we must go back to a time several days in advance of the events which have been recorded in the preceding chapter.

As we already know, there was a rude fort at Toms River, defended by a little garrison of three officers and twenty-one men. The fort itself was but a rough affair at best. On a knoll which overlooked the little settlement, from which an approach to the near-by salt-works or sawmills could be seen, stood the blockhouse. Unhewn logs seven feet high, and sharpened at one end, had been driven into the ground, and the tops were also left pointed. The building was nearly square, and at intervals of every few feet openings between the logs had been left large enough to enable the men to thrust out their guns

and sight them at any advancing foe. At each of the four corners of the structure, on a well-braced bed of logs, a small cannon had been mounted, and these four guns were rashly believed by the sturdy little garrison to be strong enough to repel the attack of any party which should be bold enough to venture within their range.

Inside the open fort, and next to the fence on one side, was a small building built of logs, and designed to serve the purpose of barracks or sleeping-places for the militia, and opposite to it on the other side was a little room, partly under the ground and partly above, in which the powder was stored. This latter room was known as the "magazine."

There was no door in all the fort, and the only means of entering or departing were scaling ladders, which we may be sure were in frequent use. Here Captain Joshua Huddy was in command, and the action in which he took part was destined to be of absorbing interest in the councils of three different nations, while all of Europe in a measure was deeply interested in the direct and indirect results which followed the attack upon the post.

It was the Tory, William Franklin, the bitter enemy of the Jersey men (who had failed to recognize his appointment by King George as the royal governor of New Jersey), and a few of his associates in the city of New York, who planned the attack. The near-by salt-works were still a source of a small income to the patriots, and if these could be destroyed, and the men who were guarding them captured, the result would be a double injury to the new nation, which Benjamin Franklin's son hated with a bitter hatred.

It was about the middle of March, 1782, when the Directors of the Board of Associated Loyalists planned the expedition which was destined to be eventful not only in the annals of New Jersey, but also in the closing years of the war for independence. Captain Evan Thomas, with about forty Tories and refugees, were to embark in New York on some whale-boats manned by about eighty sturdy seamen, over whom Lieutenant Blanchard was in command.

It was Wednesday morning, the twentieth day of March, 1782, when the party at last started from the wharf in New York and sailed down the bay. Their hopes of plunder were high, and that they would meet with

any real opposition not one in the expedition believed.

The winds were, however, unusually strong even for March, and a long delay followed, so that it was not until the twenty-third when they at last rounded Sandy Hook, and ventured to proceed on their way down the Jersey shore. At midnight the party passed safely through Cranberry Inlet, landed the armed loyalists and the soldiers and seamen at Coates Point, and then, after they had been joined by a detachment of pine robbers and outlaws, who acknowledged allegiance to neither side, they marched toward the little village.

Captain Huddy was not entirely ignorant of what was going on, though it is doubtful whether he gave much credence to the report brought him.

Poor Garrett had seen the advancing men, and bewildered though he was by the sight, he had nevertheless made his way to the fort, where he was a familiar personage, and informed the captain of the danger which threatened him. His words had been strangely confused, however, and Blackbeard played no small part in his thoughts and story.

Captain Huddy had listened to what the

man had to say, and the excitement of his visitor had been sufficient to induce him to send out a scouting party, though he professed to be skeptical as to any real peril. This party, however, had been sent toward the Point, and in this way they missed the Tory force, which was approaching from the north.

The advancing body as they approached the village were challenged by the picket, who fired at the line, and then fled to the fort with the news that the enemy was close upon him.

There was no hesitation or delay now by the bold commander of the post ; and at his direction the swivel guns were instantly manned, a musket was thrust forth from every loophole, and in silence the defenders awaited the approach of the Tories.

Nor had they long to wait. Soon the advancing lines were seen, and as they halted for a moment, Captain Thomas shouted : “ Surrender your fort, or you will all be dead men ! ”

A loud laugh was the only reply from the garrison.

“ We have no wish to have unnecessary bloodshed,” repeated Captain Thomas. “ You are surrounded and outnumbered, and if you give up peaceably you shall suffer no harm.”

Again a taunting laugh was the only reply.

"Once more I call upon you to surrender," called Captain Thomas. "You shall be protected and no one harmed if you comply; otherwise I cannot be responsible for results."

"We shall never surrender to Tories and outlaws," shouted Captain Huddy. "If you want this fort, why don't you come and get it?"

A shout of anger greeted his response, the Tory captain gave the word, and with a yell that could have been heard far away the band started for the fort. A responsive shout of defiance arose from Captain Huddy's men, and then the fusillade began. The desperate rush of the Tories found the defenders not unprepared, and as the report of the guns rang out and the smoke slowly cleared, it was seen that several of the Tories had fallen from the advancing ranks.

The rush was not stopped, however, and the men clambered upon the backs of their companions, struggling to make their way over the tops of the posts. Few of Huddy's followers were armed with bayonets, but these few were using what they had with telling effect. Others had cast aside their guns as soon as they had been discharged, and were





THE RUSH ON THE FORT



using the long pikes with which the fort was fairly well supplied.

Five more of the advancing force fell, and a negro out on the left received a ball which caused him to fall to the ground. If John Russell had been there he would have perceived that Moses, the runaway slave of his father, who had already been the source of so much of the trouble that had befallen the household, was now not likely to do him or any one else any more injury; for stretched upon the sand, face downward, the black man was now lying motionless and still.

Stubbornly the little garrison continued to defend the place against a force more than four times as great as their own. From every side the Tories were rushing, and failure only served to render them the more desperate and reckless. Logs were dragged to the walls and piled against the posts, and over these the men clambered as they strove to force their way into the inclosure. Shouts and cries and groans were mingled with the reports of the guns. It seemed as if the men were no longer human beings. Brutally both sides struck about them, and man after man fell to the ground. In spite of the cold air which was blown in from the ocean the faces

of the contesting men were soon dripping with perspiration, which, mingled with the streaks of powder, made them look like their own negro slaves.

But the patriots were greatly outnumbered, and their efforts began to flag, for human strength could not long endure the fearful contest when the attacking bands were constantly able to send fresh men into the struggle. One man fell from his position by the cannon. Another dropped from his place by the posts. Another and another were dangerously wounded. Still the remainder fought on with a courage born of sheer desperation. Three more soon fell pierced by the bullets of the onrushing forces. The ranks of the defenders were becoming rapidly thinned, but Captain Huddy still had no thought of surrendering. Every man might fall, but until that time should come, the fort must be held.

Suddenly the desperate leader was informed that the powder was all gone. At the same time he perceived that the walls were swarming with the Tories, who, with all their combined numbers, had rallied for a fresh onslaught. There was nothing more which could be done now to defend the place, and with a

voice choked by his emotions the doughty leader yielded to save unnecessary loss of life ; and so the little fort at Toms River fell into the hands of the British.

There are stories current that after the surrender, in their rage at what they were pleased to call the foolish defense of the place, the Tories slew several men ; but doubtless many of these grew out of the intense and bitter feelings of the times. The truth seems to be that only one man was treated in this manner, a major who dwelt at Toms River, who was hated by the pine robbers as was no other man of the region, not even Captain Huddy himself. Let us mercifully trust that the stories were untrue, and that the deeds of cruelty were largely born of the imagination of those whose sorrow over the loss of the fort was too keen to make them cool or even candid reporters of the story of its fall.

At all events the fort was lost now, and its captors had won but little by their success. They had planned to devastate all the country about Shark River, but the condition of their own men was such as to call for an immediate return to the city, where suitable care might be had for the suffering and wounded.

Captain Huddy and some of his men were,

that same Sunday afternoon, placed on board the *Arrogant* to be taken to the city. The day was raw and chilly. The wind as it swept over the sea was biting, and the heavy, lead-colored clouds, as they covered the face of the sky, seemed to shut out all hope from the mind of the prisoner captain. Perhaps they gave him a foreboding of the events which were soon to follow, — events which caused even the attack upon the fort at Toms River to be for the time ignored.

On Monday forenoon, the fleet returned to New York, and the brave captain, Joshua Huddy, and his men were instantly confined in the old Sugar House Prison.

The Board of Loyalists, with William Franklin at their head, were furiously angry at the man who had made so brave a stand against those whom they had sent to take him prisoner, and destroy the fort of which he had been in command. Surely the sturdy captain was entitled to all the privileges of a prisoner of war, but for such little things as that William Franklin had no mind and less care.

On the first day of April, Captain Huddy was removed by their order to the provost jail, and a week later was placed in irons, and sent with two of his friends to the armed ship



Britannia, which then was serving as guard-ship off Sandy Hook.

Captain Lippencott was then ordered to the guard-ship with secret instructions by the Board, and Captain Huddy was transferred to his custody.

On the morning of April 12, Captain Huddy was taken from the ship by Lippencott, and with sixteen other loyalists, and six sailors from the Britannia, landed at Gravelly Point on the Navesink.

There a gallows was built of three rails by the water's edge, and a barrel and rope were brought forward, and placed beneath it.

Perhaps governed by some impulse they could not have themselves explained, the evil-minded Tories, after the rope had been placed about the brave captain's neck, stopped for a moment to give him time in which to dictate his will. This will is still in existence,<sup>1</sup> and begins with these words: —

In the name of God, Amen.

I, Joshua Huddy, of Middletown in the County of Monmouth, being of sound Mind and Memory, but expecting shortly to depart

<sup>1</sup> In the library of the New Jersey Historical Society at Newark, New Jersey.

this life, do declare this my last Will and Testament. First, I commit my Soul into the hands of the Almighty God, hoping he may receive it in mercy, and next I commit my Body to the Earth, etc., etc.

A placard was then placed upon his breast by the brutal men which read as follows:—

We, the refugees, having with grief long beheld the cruel murders of our brethren, and finding nothing but such measures daily carrying into execution; we therefore determine not to suffer without taking vengeance for the numerous cruelties, and thus begin, having made use of Captain Huddy as the first object to present to your view, and further determine to hang man for man, as long as a refugee is left existing.

UP GOES HUDDY FOR PHILIP WHITE.

The barrel was then kicked from beneath his feet, and so the soul of Joshua Huddy, one of the noblest and purest patriots that ever trod the Jersey soil, was launched into eternity.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### GEORGE WASHINGTON'S DEMAND

JOHN RUSSELL did not linger long amidst the ruins of what had recently been the block house and dwelling places of Toms River. Leaving Garrett to find his way as best he might, he rode swiftly homeward, intending to spread the alarm in the county as he passed, but by that strange facility which evil tidings ever have, he found that the news had preceded him.

The restlessness and rage of the Monmouth people, when the truth was known, knew no bounds. Sad as was the loss of the fort, the fate of the gallant captain was still worse, and when at last his death occurred, it almost seemed as if every man and even the women and children were consumed with a burning desire to do something, they knew not what, to save themselves and visit a merited punishment upon the perpetrators of the crime. Captain Huddy's last words, "I shall die innocent, and in a good cause," were upon

the tongue of every man, and the indifferent or half-hearted, of whom we may be sure there were not many, seemed to be inspired with as keen a desire as had the others to bring the murderer to justice.

When it was learned that Lippencott himself had been the one who had pulled the rope which sent the captain to his long home, even his brutal companions having hesitated when the final moment came, and that Lippencott had also brutally reported to the Board of Associated Loyalists in New York that he had indeed carried out their instructions, and had "exchanged" Huddy for Philip White, the feeling among the patriots almost broke over all bounds.

The body of poor Captain Huddy had been left swinging from the rude gallows until four o'clock in the afternoon, when it had been tenderly carried to the residence of Captain James Greene in Monmouth Court House. Three days afterwards the Reverend Doctor John Woodhull, the pastor of the Presbyterian church in the little hamlet, had preached the funeral sermon over the dead body of the fallen patriot, speaking from the steps of the old hotel to an immense assembly of people, that filled the village street. The body was

then buried with all the honors of war, it is supposed in the graveyard of the old Tennant church, on the field where the battle of Monmouth had been fought a few years before this time; but to-day the spot is unknown, and the sturdy old patriot is resting in a grave unmarked and neglected.

But the friends of the fallen hero were not idle. Doctor Woodhull, like many another Jersey preacher, was an intense patriot, and, calling to his aid General David Forman, devised a plan of action.

A public meeting was speedily called at Monmouth Court House, and after several burning speeches by the leaders, and a quiet but strong response had been given by the assembly, a petition was prepared and signed by fourteen of the most prominent people of Old Monmouth, entreating Congress and General Washington "to take immediate measures to retaliate, that such murders might in the future be prevented."

The affidavits of many citizens, and the label which had been left by the Tories upon the body of poor Captain Huddy, were taken by General Forman himself to Elizabeth Town, and there shown to General Knox and Gouverneur Morris, who were commissioners of

prisoners, and then carried to General Washington himself, who was at that time at Newburgh on the Hudson.

General Washington, aroused by the dastardly deed, at once called a council of war consisting of twenty-five of his officers, and submitted to them all the papers in the case, and then requested of them separately, and in writing, direct replies to the following questions: —

1. Upon the statement of facts in the above case, is retaliation justifiable and expedient?

2. If justifiable, ought it to take place immediately, or should a representation be made to Sir Henry Clinton, and satisfaction demanded from him?

3. In case of representation and demand, who should be the person or persons to be required?

4. In case of refusal, and retaliation becoming necessary, of what description shall the officer be on whom it is to take place, and how shall he be designated for the purpose?

Without consulting one with another, every member of the council wrote his answer, and gave it sealed to Washington. Unanimously



they were agreed that retaliation was justifiable and expedient; but the most of them were of the opinion that a demand should first be made upon Sir Henry Clinton for the surrender of Lippencott, and in case of refusal to deliver him, then an officer of the same rank as Captain Huddy should be selected by lot from their prisoners, and that he should be executed, not in the spirit of revenge, but as a warning to all future evil-doers.

No sadder commentary upon the terrible nature of war could be made than that which these resolute and desperate leaders gave when they arrived at this conclusion, a conclusion in which all twenty-five were agreed, and of whom three were not in favor of granting the delay even to give Sir Henry the opportunity of bringing the murderer of Captain Huddy to justice himself.

A copy of the resolution was sent to Congress, referred by it to a committee consisting of Elias Boudinot, of New Jersey, John Morin Scott, of New York, and Thomas Bell, of South Carolina.

These three careful men made their report, and it was then resolved, —

“That Congress, having deliberately considered the said letter and the papers attend-

ing it, and being deeply impressed with the necessity of convincing the enemies of these United States, by the most decided conduct, that the repetition of their unprecedented and inhuman cruelties, so contrary to the laws of nations and of war, will no longer be suffered with impunity, do unanimously approve of the firm and judicious conduct of the commander-in-chief, in the application to the British general in New York, and do hereby assure him of their firmest support in his fixed purpose of exemplary retaliation."

Washington, however, had not waited for the action of Congress, and before they had "resolved," he had already sent a letter to Sir Henry Clinton in which he inclosed copies of all the papers in the case.

In this letter, Washington wrote: "To save the innocent I demand the guilty. Captain Lippencott, therefore, as the officer who commanded at the execution of Captain Huddy, must be given up; or if that officer was of inferior rank to him, then so many of the perpetrators as will, according to the tariff of exchange, be an equivalent. To do this will mark the justice of your excellency's character. In failure of it, I shall hold myself justifiable in the eyes of God and man for the measure to which I shall resort."

In reply General Clinton sent a letter, in which were these words : —

“My personal feelings, therefore, require no such incitement to urge me to take every proper notice of the barbarous outrage against humanity (which you have represented to me) the moment that it came to my notice ; and, accordingly, when I heard of Captain Huddy’s death (which was only four days before I received your letter), I instantly ordered a strict inquiry to be made in all the circumstances, and shall bring the perpetrators of it to a speedy trial.”

Sir Henry Clinton, on the day after this letter was written, issued an order forbidding all removals for any cause in the future of any prisoner from the prison-house by the Board of Associated Loyalists, and a court-martial of Lippencott was also instantly ordered.

In the trial which followed, Lippencott clearly showed that, though he had been guilty of the crime charged against him, he had done what he did by the distinct verbal order of Governor Franklin and his Board. He also showed that Franklin had tried to induce him to swear differently, a fact which, if anything more was needed, was sufficient

of itself to make the Tory son of Benjamin Franklin detested by his so-called friends as much as he was by his open enemies.

This Board of Loyalists, at last feeling that something must be said to explain their action, sent forth a writing, and among other statements brought in that of Aaron White concerning the death of his brother Philip. They also tried to apologize for what they had done by declaring,—

“We thought it high time to convince the rebels that we would no longer submit to such glaring acts of barbarism, and, though we lament the necessity by which we have been driven, to begin a retaliation of intolerable cruelties. We, therefore, pitched upon Joshua Huddy as a proper subject for retaliation, because he was not only well known to have been a very active and cruel persecutor of our friends, but had not been ashamed to boast of his having been instrumental in hanging Stephen Edwards,<sup>1</sup> a worthy loyalist, and the first of our brethren who fell a victim to republican fury in Monmouth County. The recent instance of cruelty, added to the many daring acts of the same nature, which have been perpetrated with impunity by a

<sup>1</sup> See *A Jersey Boy in the Revolution*.

daring set of rebels, well known by the name of the Monmouth Retaliators, fired our party with an indignation only to be felt by men who, for a series of years, have beheld many of their friends and neighbors butchered in cold blood, under the usurped form of law, and often without that ceremony, for no other crime than that of maintaining their allegiance to the government under which they were born, and which rebels audaciously call treason against the States."

In the list of names given by the Board of Loyalists to prove their claim, almost without an exception, they were those of outlaws and pine-robbers, men of no party, and without a spark of love for Great Britain or the colonies, who had seized the opportunity presented by the war to prey upon all alike. Some of these men were criminals of the worst kind, and it was only in sheer desperation, and as a last resort to protect their homes and their wives and children, that the Monmouth men had treated them as they did.

The claim of Lippencott that he had acted only upon the orders he had himself received when he had executed Captain Joshua Huddy on the shore of the Navesink, was in a measure borne out by the facts, that is, if he had

required any one to throw the blame upon, which is doubtful. However, the British were in a quandary. To give up Lippencott upon Washington's demand would arouse the most vindictive hatred of the Board of Associated Loyalists. To retain him would lend color to the demand and threat of Washington that he would retaliate. Sir Henry would doubtless have given the man up, for he felt the shame and disgrace of the charge, but Washington was at a distance from the city, the war was practically ended, and all were merely waiting for the terms of peace to be agreed upon.

Doubtless hoping that something would arise to pacify the angry Continentals the finding of the court-martial was as follows:—

“The court, having considered the evidence for and against Captain Richard Lippencott, together with what he had to offer in his defense; and it appearing that (although Joshua Huddy was executed without proper authority) what the prisoner did in the matter was not the effect of malice or ill-will, but proceeded from a conviction that it was his duty to obey the orders of the Board of Directors of Associated Loyalists, and his not doubting their having full authority to give such order;



the court are of the opinion that he, the prisoner, Captain Richard Lippencott, is *not guilty* of the murder laid to his charge, and do therefore acquit him."

The effect of this finding cannot be understood in this our day. The people, already stirred more than the British general was aware, were now roused to a pitch of fury unknown before. They were in no condition to listen to right or reason. Sir Guy Carleton at this time took command of the British forces in America, and expressed himself in the strongest terms against the act and action. He immediately disbanded the Board of Associated Loyalists, and promised to make further inquiries into the acquittal of Lippencott.

The Americans were in no mood to temporize. Two lines of action were immediately entered upon; one by Washington, and the other, which more closely concerns this story, began one night when a huge rough-spoken sailor entered the home of John Russell, and placed before him a plan which instantly aroused all the interest of that young soldier.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### RETALIATION

“You know who I am, I take it,” said John Russell’s visitor, when he had accepted the invitation to enter, and had seated himself in the chair which was offered him.

“I think every one in Old Monmouth knows you, Captain Adam Hyler,” said John quietly ; “and if I mistake not the British themselves are not entirely unfamiliar with your name.”

“Very likely,” responded the visitor, with a laugh that caused “King John” to seek his father’s side and stare in open-mouthed wonder at his strange visitor.

And truly there was much in the appearance of Captain Adam Hyler to startle a bolder heart than that of the youthful “king.” As has been said, he was an immense man, with great shaggy hair and beard, and such heavy gray eyebrows as almost to conceal the twinkling eyes behind them. For nearly three years the name of Adam Hyler had

been a familiar one along the Jersey shore. At the outbreak of the Revolution he had been in the British navy; but the call of his country had led him to desert, and though he knew of the threat to hang him at the yard-arm the moment he was captured, apparently he had been in no way deterred or frightened.

He had organized a force of men whose spirits were as bold as his own, and along the Raritan and the Jersey shore, from Sandy Hook to Egg Harbor, he had been engaged in his exploits. His men were marvelously skilled in the use of their oars, and in the long whaleboats which he built were said to be capable of making twelve miles an hour and yet to move with such stillness that the luckless vessels he attacked were seldom aware of his approach until he was directly upon them. Many had been the captures of the bold captain. Sloops, schooners, and even gunboats were not exempt, and thus far he had successfully avoided every attempt of the British to take him, though they had offered large sums for him dead or alive. And now this hardy leader of the Jersey "navy," if a fleet of whaleboats and barges was deserving of such a dignified name, was a visitor in the house of John Russell.

“Very likely they may have heard of me somewhere, sometime,” repeated Captain Hyler, his great voice breaking into a laugh that again startled the little “king,” who clung more closely to his father’s hand. “And they’ll have occasion to hear of me again if all goes well to-morrow night.”

“What have you in mind for to-morrow night?” inquired John quietly.

“I expect to put my hands on that rascal Lippencott; and if once I do, he’ll deem it wise to come along with me, I’m thinking.”

As John Russell did not speak, though his interest and surprise at the boldness of the scheme were clearly apparent, the captain continued: —

“Josh Huddy and I have been friends, as you know, or perhaps you don’t know, since we could toddle alone. We were like brothers, and as far back as I can remember we’ve been like brothers. When we were boys, his home was almost as much mine as my own, and he did n’t have a very different opinion of mine, I’m thinking. Leastwise he used to be there day and night, and he called my mother his ‘marm’ just as I did his, you know. Well, Josh Huddy’s gone, — how he went and when he went, I don’t need to tell you,” and the

heavy voice became like a deep sullen roar, as his emotion for the moment almost seemed to overpower the rugged sailor.

"I'm not blaming Washington," he resumed. "He's done all that could be expected of him, I suppose; but I happen to know that he'd be mightily pleased to have this rascal Lippencott just put his head inside of his lines. He'd receive a welcome that would fairly startle him, double-dyed rascal though he is."

"Look out, Captain Hyler," said John, a smile creeping over his face as he spoke. "You must n't forget that Lippencott is a distant relative of mine — by marriage. He's in the family, you see."

"Can't help that," replied the captain sturdily. "It's the only claim to decency he has, and even that won't go far with you or me, I'm thinking. It'll solve the whole trouble if we can only get him into Jersey."

"Yes: if you *can* only get him there," suggested John.

"Well, he won't come of his own accord, — I'm not so foolish as to believe any such stuff as that, — and if he does n't come 'willy,' then the thing to do is to make him come 'nilly.' You see what I mean?"

“No.”

“Well, then, in plain English, my plan is to go to New York and get him.”

“What!” exclaimed John aghast, and sitting quickly erect as he spoke.

“That’s it; no more, no less. We can’t get him to come to us, and the only thing left is to go to him.”

“It can’t be done.”

“It can be done and it shall! Now, listen, and I’ll tell you how. I’ve got one of my best whaleboats up here in the Kills. It’ll carry sixteen men besides one to steer, and he’ll make seventeen, if I figure it out correctly. Every one of those sixteen will be a picked man that can handle a long oar as easily as that boy of yours can spin a top, and I’ll go along just for company’s sake. I’m going to have them all dressed up so that we’ll look like a regular press-gang, and if any one should happen to see us, he’d run as if the plague itself was after him.”

“When are you planning to go?”

“To-morrow night. We’ll start soon after sunset.”

“From the Kills?”

“That’s correct. We’ll put out from that very place.”



"And go to the city?"

"That's what we'll do."

"Where will you land?"

"At the foot of Whitehall."

"Do you know where Lippencott lives?"

"I do that, the very house. He's stopping at a place on Broad Street, and it won't take us more than five minutes to walk there from the dock either."

"How did you find out?"

"I shan't tell you. 'Tis enough for you that I know what I'm talking about."

"Suppose some one sees you? You can't hide all those men."

"I don't want to hide them. I told you if any one got sight of us he'd run, for the Britishers themselves don't love the press-gangs."

"And why did you come here to tell me about it?" inquired John slowly.

"You know that already. I want you to go with us and be one of the crew."

"You know I can't do much. My leg bothers me so that I can't run."

"That's the very reason I am after you. We want men who just *can't* run. Besides, John Russell, as your father's son, you want to bring this rascal Lippencott to justice.

We all know what he did in this house. Then Josh Huddy was a friend of yours, almost as great a friend as he was to me, and we just can't stop now. There's a risk in the trip, — I'm not denying that, — but luck has always been on my side; you can't deny that either."

"The pitcher that goes often to the well is broken at last."

"It's all right, John," said the captain, rising, and his voice changing. "I would n't urge you to go against your will. You've a wife and mother and child, and 'tis but natural you should think of them. I did n't know but you had special reasons for joining us, but I'd be the last man to urge you against your will. Every man who goes to-morrow night must go heart and soul, or not at all."

"Hold on, Captain Hyler," said John quickly, "I have n't said I would n't go. I want to go with you, and I thank you for the chance. Now tell me just what it is you want me to do and all about it."

Completely mollified by John's words, the rough captain remained for another half hour carefully explaining all that was to be done, how each man was to dress, and when and

where they were to assemble. When he departed, it was with the promise that John would be at the appointed place in ample time.

Accordingly, on the following afternoon, John Russell bade his family good-by, and, striving to conceal the anxiety he felt, departed for the place on the Kills, which was to be the rendezvous of Captain Hyler's band. When he arrived, he found that the most of the men were already there, and as he looked into their faces he knew that the sturdy captain's confidence in his followers was not misplaced. They were a determined lot, strong and true, and already experienced in daring deeds like that upon which they were about to engage.

It was not long before the leader and the remaining men appeared, and as soon as the sun had set, Captain Hyler gave the word, the crew took their places at the long oars, and the whaleboat started on its perilous venture. John was pulling an oar, but his occupation could not prevent him from perceiving the wonderful skill with which the boat was handled. Almost as silent as a shadow, it darted over the water. No one spoke, and the direction of the boat was left entirely to Captain Hyler himself.

For three hours they continued on their way, past the gunboats in the harbor, which apparently had no suspicions of the swiftly moving whaleboat, on toward the lights of the city, which became steadily more and more distinct, and at last they approached the rude dock which lay at the foot of Whitehall.

Though John Russell had not spoken since they had started, his excitement had steadily increased, and when at last the whaleboat was run in alongside the dock, and in a low voice the captain gave the word for them to ship their oars and land, he was almost expecting to behold a force of armed men, awaiting their approach.

Their coming, however, had apparently produced but slight interest among the few men to be seen near the dock, and the very openness and boldness of Captain Hyler's scheme, perhaps, were their best protection. At all events, the captain quietly ordered three of the men to remain with the whaleboat, and with all the others, started boldly toward the house in which Lippencott was said to have his home.

Once or twice they met men who stopped for a moment and gazed after them, but the word "press-gang" seemed to be a talisman

which speedily sent every one upon his way. The night was not dark, though there was no moon, and Captain Hyler had no difficulty in finding his way. Soon they entered Broad Street, and then in a few minutes stopped before the door of the house, where it was hoped they would find the man they were seeking.

Signals had already been agreed upon which were to be given in case of need, and then, after stationing his men so that they would not attract the attention of any chance passerby, Captain Hyler took John and climbed the steps. A moment later the brass knocker upon the door resounded, and all knew the summons had been given.

"Now, John, remember," whispered the captain, "throw your arm around his neck, if he comes to the door. If we can't get him to do that, and have to go inside, then — Hush! Here comes some one," he hastily added.

The door was opened by a serving maid, who glanced curiously at the visitors, and, apparently not satisfied with her inspection, was about to close the door again sharply, when Captain Hyler said quietly, —

"We would see Captain Richard Lippen-cott. Is he within?"

"No, he is n't within," replied the maid tartly.

"Can you tell us where we can find him?"

"I can; but I don't know whether I will or not. He does n't like strangers."

"We are no strangers to him, I assure you, and so he would inform you if he were here. It is important that we see him. Could you not summon him?"

"No, I could n't. He's at a cock-fight up on the Bowery Lane, and no self-respecting maid would go there."

"No, no, of course not," said the captain soothingly. "Are you sure he is there?"

"Yes, I know he is."

"When will he return?"

"You know as much about that as I. Probably not before morning."

"No, probably he won't."

"Who shall I tell him wanted to see him?"

"Tell him Adam Hyler and John Russell called to pay him their respects. Tell him also they will not fail to see him again."

"I'll tell him," and the maid quickly closed and barred the door.

The expedition had failed, and as the men made their way back to the dock, their very manner betrayed their disappointment. When





THE RESCUE



they arrived at the place where their whale-boat was, they beheld the three men there bending over the bodies of two motionless men who had just been drawn from the water. For a moment John peered over the shoulder of one, and, as the light fell upon the face of one of the men, he uttered a sharp exclamation, and instantly turned to Captain Hyler, who was close behind him.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### A SINGLE STAR

THE sight of the prisoners rushing to the deck of the Jersey was for the time ignored in the excitement which had arisen over the shouts of the men who were already there, and the frantic actions of the Irish recruiting officer, who by this time had discovered the nature of his "recruits." Too angry to speak, that officer had flung off his coat and in his shirt-sleeves stood facing the grinning men, undecided whether he should visit his wrath upon the first of those on whom he could lay his hands or give all his attention to the hosts which had invaded his person.

Apparently the necessity of the latter action prevailed, and as he danced about upon the deck, striking himself, and at the same time trying to shake off the troublesome pests, the delight of the watching prisoners broke forth afresh, and again the ringing cheers were heard from the assembly.

The effect of all these things was to increase

the rage of the Irishman still more; but finding himself unable to cope with his tiny antagonists, in a paroxysm of rage he made a rush for the yawl in which he had come, and speedily giving the word was rowed swiftly back toward the city.

His departure still further delighted the beholders, and the cheers they sent after the departing boat were loud and long. It seemed for the time as if the guard on the Jersey was entirely unable to cope with the mass of prisoners. They swarmed over the deck, rushing in every direction, and shouting as if every man was beside himself.

This condition did not last long, however, and soon the hateful cry "Down, rebels! Down!" was given by the captain, who was apparently as angry as the departing recruiting officer had been. The habits of many months prevailed, and as the command was given, the prisoners slowly began to move toward the hatchway.

The fact that they were yielding was not lost upon the guard, and making a rush together upon the enfeebled men they drove them in a mass toward the hold. So falling over and upon one another, the wretched men were pushed through the hatchway, some suf-

fering severely from the injuries occasioned by their falls, and many were the bruises which marked the event in the days which followed.

As a punishment for their offense the food of the prisoners was again reduced in quantity while the quality remained the same, and dearly were they compelled to pay for their treatment of the Irishman who had come to gain recruits for his king.

"Anyway," said Simon that night to Peter, "we've given the rascals a lesson they'll not soon forget. It'll be a long time before this fellow will be free from his 'recruits.' I'm hoping he'll feed them as well as he promised us he would."

"It'll only make things worse for us," replied Peter gloomily.

"Nay; don't you believe that. It'll be many a day before another one of those fellows will dare put his head into the hold of the Jersey."

Simon proved to be a false prophet, for the treatment of the Irish recruiting officer in no way seemed to deter his companions from pressing the claims of "good" King George. And the methods they employed were in a measure successful, at least with the men who either had been made so wretched and hope-



less by the miseries of their prison life that they were ready to hail any form of escape as legitimate, or who never had had a very strong feeling of love for the little country which was battling for its very existence.

All the news from the field was withheld from the prisoners except that which pertained to the success of the British, and this was so frequently exaggerated and enlarged that many were inclined to believe that the Americans had been conquered and the end of the war had come. Against this conclusion Simon battled bravely, assuring Peter that if it were really so, the British would no longer keep them as prisoners where they were, but would be glad to set them free. So endeavoring to believe that no news must be to an extent good news, the hardy young sailor strove to keep up not only his own heart, but that of his younger companion, who had been less able to endure the miseries of their imprisonment.

In addition to the distorted reports from the field, the recruiting officers enlarged upon the hopelessness of the struggle in which the Americans were engaged, and then in contrast pictured the condition of the British soldiers: well fed and well dressed, in winter protected

from the cold and in summer from the heat, living a life of comparative ease, and called upon to do little but chase the Yankees, who were represented as ever fleeing before the all powerful redcoats. Small cause of wonder is it that many of the wretched prisoners yielded, persuading themselves that if the officers had spoken the truth they were justified in their actions, and whatever they did would be speedily forgotten in the issue of the war, which it was boldly declared had already, in all but name, been won by the English armies. Besides, doubtless many fondly hoped that opportunities to escape would be found in the camp, none of which might be looked for in the detested prison-ship, cut off as it was from contact with sea or shore.

Though the number of those who yielded to the persuasions of the recruiting officers was not small, still it must not by any means be conceived that the mass of the prisoners did not remain true to their country. Grimly, tenaciously, the most of them clung to their land; and of the most of those who entered the service of the English king no word was ever received, for they were sent to join the army in the West Indies, and at last either settled there or remained among the redcoats,

not caring to return to America when at last her independence had been won.

Once or twice Simon almost yielded, but whenever his spirits fell, those of Peter seemed to rise, and in this manner they succeeded in holding up each other. Simon, however, for the most part was bearing his captivity the better of the two, inasmuch as his power of endurance was greater. It was a perpetual anxiety to him to see that his friend's strength was rapidly waning, and that unless something was speedily done he would be left to himself to endure the remaining days which gave slight promise of ever coming to an end.

Consequently, as the slow weeks passed, Simon was ever on the alert for the longed-for opportunity to escape to come; but in the long winter no opportunity was given, though a few of the men managed to get away one day on the ice, when the water about the Wallabout was frozen. As some of those who made the attempt were brought back to the Jersey frozen, Simon did not dare suggest the project to Peter, though for himself he would eagerly have accepted all the risks of the venture.

At length the warmer days of the spring returned. The air as it swept from the Long

Island shore was fragrant and balmy, and it was a delight once more to be able to remain on deck throughout the day, for the condition of the hold, foul as it had been before, had now become intolerable. The number of the prisoners had steadily increased, and never before had there been such a crowd on board. Wherever one looked gaunt faces and hollow staring eyes were close to him. The brutality of the guard had in no wise decreased, and filth, famine, and sickness were prevalent as never they had been before.

At this time a new project suggested itself to Simon, who, through all the miseries of their life, had not entirely lost heart. He did not, however, refer to it, not even mentioning it to Peter, whose hopes he did not wish to raise again until he was reasonably certain that his plan was not entirely hopeless.

One night Peter had been lying for a long time awake. He had not moved from his position, and only occasionally opened his eyes to gaze at the open trap door in the hatchway, which was almost directly above him. The main hatchway was still closed every night when the prisoners were ordered below, but in this there was a trap-door, small, it was true, but still of sufficient size to enable a

man to pass through it. This gave a small current of fresh air, and the privilege of sleeping near it was greatly prized. For three nights it had been the turn of Peter and Simon to enjoy this, and on the present night Peter, as has been said, was occasionally opening his eyes to gaze at the trap-door, through which he could see one star twinkling in the heavens.

Slight as the vision was, it nevertheless was a source of comfort to the suffering young prisoner. When he closed his eyes he was thinking of what it must mean to one who could stand under the open sky and see all the lights in the firmament. How long it had been since such a privilege had been his! Would it ever be his again?

Then Peter's thoughts would wander to the brothers and sisters he had left so long ago on the Jersey shore. Doubtless they had suffered as well as he, and the uncertainty as to their whereabouts deepened the sense of wretchedness in Peter's heart. Then there was his father. Not one word had he heard of him for years now, and it was but natural to conclude that long ago he must have given way under the sufferings which must have been his.

The tears were slowly trickling down the young prisoner's face as he thought of all these things, and then he opened his eyes again for another glimpse of that star. Yes, there it was, shining steadily and with a clear light that somehow brought him a measure of comfort. Something must hold it in its place, though he could not see the props. Perhaps, after all, his own little life, insignificant and humble though it was, was not entirely outside the supporting power of the great maker of stars and men.

Suddenly Peter glanced more keenly at the open trap-door, for the light of the star had disappeared. In a moment he could perceive the legs of a man coming through the aperture. Some one was entering the hold, and he was striving to come so quietly as not to disturb or arouse any of the sleeping men. It was strange that any one should be coming at that time of the night, and Peter quickly turned over to call Simon's attention to the visitor.

"Simon, Simon," he whispered, "look at the hatchway. Who's that coming?" But Simon made no response, and Peter sat erect and stretched forth his hand to rouse his friend. The place, however, was empty, and Peter knew immediately that his friend was not by his side.



Thoroughly aroused now, Peter turned again to look at the hatchway, half satisfied that he knew who the entering man was. Nor was he surprised when in the dim light he saw the man approach, stepping softly, and careful not to disturb any of the slumbering prisoners, and soon lie down by his side, for Peter had now resumed his former position.

“Simon,” he whispered, “where have you been? What have you been doing?”

“Did you see me?” replied Simon.

“Yes; tell me what you are doing.”

“All right. I’d expected to tell you soon, though I thought I’d wait till everything was fixed. I’ve been out with Billy the Ram looking at the stars and holding sweet converse with him. He’s a jewel, Billy is.”

“Go on,” whispered Peter eagerly, as Simon ceased for a moment.

“Well, Billy’s the only sentry to-night. They don’t seem to think it’s worth while to have more than one on guard now, for the prisoners are all supposed to be safe when the hatchways are barred. Peter, I’ve invested some more of my money with Billy.”

“I did n’t know you had any money left.”

“I have n’t much, and what little I have I

must use carefully. But Billy is willing to look after it for me, and as I only give him a little at a time his appetite seems to be coming on all right."

"How many nights have you been up there?"

"This is the third, and I'm hoping to-morrow night will be my last."

"What do you mean?"

"Just this: I've got Billy now so he is n't frightened, and indeed he seems very willing for me to join him in his nightly vigils. We discuss the war and I don't know what all, and if you'll believe it he's almost making a convert of me," and Simon laughed softly as he spoke. "I'm thinking one more talk will finish the work."

"I don't understand what you mean."

"Well, I'll explain it to you as well as I can," and Simon proceeded to set forth his project in a manner which speedily aroused all the long dormant interest of the friend by his side.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE PLOT

"FOR a long time, as you know," began Simon, "I've been looking out for a chance to get away. I thought I had it all fixed when the other members of our mess got away in that yawl. That was a mean trick they served us," he added angrily.

"Yes, I know," responded Peter, "and I've blamed myself ever since for being the hindrance to you that I was. You might have escaped if you had n't turned back for me."

"Not a bit of it," replied Simon quickly. "Do you think I'd have gone and left you here? Well, I trow not. I'd rather be with you on the Jersey than ashore without you. Besides, it was n't your fault. That fellow who pushed you back and jumped into your place was just beside himself, he was so excited over the prospect of escaping. If he'd been a little cooler he'd have got away just the same, and we could have gone along too. However, that's all ancient history now."

"I wonder if they really did get away."

"Of course they did. If they'd been taken or shot, don't you think we'd have heard of it? They've never been very slow on this old tub about serving out the bad news to us, and they've never even once referred to those fellows, so I know they got away all right. And that's what we are going to do, too, let me tell you. Now I've been holding sweet converse with Billy the Ram, lo, these three nights. At first he was a little dubious about letting me up on deck, but when he found out that I did n't do any harm, and besides I slipped a coin into his hand, it seemed to cheer him up a bit. Then he has strong hopes of making a Britisher of me. I tell you, Peter, you'd be surprised to see how strong his arguments are for me to enter the service," and Simon again laughed softly as he spoke.

"Why do you say you'll get away to-morrow night?"

"Because I have only one coin left. It's then or never. Now listen, and I'll tell you what we'll do. If to-morrow night is n't very dark, then we'll postpone our departure till the first dark night thereafter. If to-morrow does suit our purpose, then, as soon as everything is all quiet on board ship, I'll go up on deck and have my nightly interview with Billy.

After I've got him where I want him, I'll either let him go overboard or put him to sleep on deck, and we'll not stand on the order of our departure."

"How will you depart?"

"It is n't 'you,' it's 'we,' I tell you. I wish you'd stop talking as if I was the only one in this scheme. We'll go or stay together."

"But how will you — I mean we — go?"

"We'll have to jump overboard and strike out for the shore."

Peter was silent a moment, and then said, "If you think you can do it, Simon, you'd better try it; but I'm sure I'd never reach the shore alive. I have n't strength to swim the length of the Jersey, to say nothing of getting ashore, and then having to run when we landed, if by any chance we should manage to do that. No, Simon, you go alone."

"I'll not go alone, and you'll go with me," replied Simon decidedly. "It's a chance, I know, but if we stay here there's no chance about it, for the wonder is that we've been able to live through it thus far. Now I'm decided about this, Peter; we'll go or stay together."

"We'll go then," said Peter quietly. He

had no hope of ever gaining the shore, but in his extremity he was determined that he would not again compel his brave-hearted friend to remain on the Jersey. For himself he felt confident that there could be but one issue, and in his present condition of misery and hopelessness it mattered little when that should come. It would at least be a release, and for even that Peter was prepared. "I say, Simon," he added, "do you expect to kill Billy?"

"No, no. I don't want to harm him, but he mustn't stand in our way, that's all. He's the sentry every night now, and he must take his chances with us. That's all fair in war, you know; but if I can fix it so that he is n't harmed, I shall not touch him, you may rest assured of that. Still, he must n't stand in our way. We're desperate, and this is likely to be our last chance."

"Do you expect any one to go besides you and me?"

"That's what I can't decide," replied Simon hesitatingly. "What do you think?"

"It seems hard to leave any one here if he can get away. We might talk with a few tomorrow about it. If they want to try it, it seems only fair to let them."



“All right, then; I’ll leave that to you. Don’t tell too many, though, for it might leak out, and then none of us would get away. You take charge of that part of the affair, and I’ll have Billy the Ram for my share.”

The whispered conversation ceased, but neither of the young prisoners was able to sleep much in the hours that followed. Simon, eager and hopeful, was thinking over the very words he would say to the sentry and how he would best be able to dispose of him, or rather prevent him from preventing them, for he had no desire to do the good-natured Irishman harm if it could be avoided. Still, come what might, Simon was determined upon the venture, and it would be wise for the guard not to attempt to thwart him in his desperation.

Peter, however, was too weak physically to share in the hope of his friend. To him the project seemed reckless and hopeless, but he had arrived at a stage of mind where it mattered little what the outcome might be. Even death would be a release from his present sufferings, and to endure them longer seemed beyond the possibility of human strength.

With the coming of the daylight a small measure of hope returned to Peter, though it

was only strong enough to make him decide that he would inform a few of the prisoners, upon whom he thought he could rely, of the project Simon had formed, and if they desired to incur the risk, then at least the opportunity had been given them.

Simon carefully avoided Peter all through the day, and, indeed, it would have appeared to any casual observer that he was the most abjectly hopeless of all the wretched men on the prison-ship. However, when the men were ordered below for the night, his manner speedily changed.

"We could n't have a better night," he whispered to Peter. "It'll be dark as Egypt soon, and they could n't see us with a telescope."

"Then you are going to try it, are you?"

"Try it? Of course I am. Now, Peter, you must look sharp. Just the moment you hear a sound on deck you must come up through the trap door, and mind you are to be the first one to come, too. Don't let any one crowd you back this time."

Peter promised obediently, and in a brief time Simon crawled silently from beside him and cautiously made his way up through the opening. Others besides Peter were evidently

watching him, and Peter's excitement was keen enough now to satisfy even his ardent friend. Leaving his place he took his stand by the ladder, resolved in the selfishness of his desperation that he would be the first to mount if the opportunity was given.

Meanwhile Simon had made his way to the deck, and in the dim light at first he could not discern the form of the sentry. Soon, however, he discovered him standing near the rail, and he cautiously approached.

"How are you to-night, Billy?" he inquired in a low voice.

"An' who be yez?" replied the sentry, grasping his gun and turning sharply about.

"Oh, you know who I am," replied Simon, at the same time stretching forth his hand, which Billy eagerly grasped, and as eagerly received the contents.

"To be sure, Oi do. It's better nor a goold mine, yez be."

"I'd willingly give all I have," responded Simon, with mock humility, "if I could only be as you are, Billy."

"An' why not? There's no reason at all, at all, why yez should n't be after being one wid us. If yez'll only spake the word, its tomorrow yez'll be free. An a goold cap, an'

goold lace, an all the mate yez can be after atin'. It's right glad Oi'll be to spake a good word for yez mesilf."

"You are all right, I know that, Billy; but I'm afraid the recruiting officer won't be of your mind."

"Niver yez be afraid o' thot," replied Billy eagerly. "It's that same Oi can be after fixin for yez. Now, me bye," —

But Billy did not complete the sentence. His back had been turned for a moment to the prisoner, and summoning all the strength he could muster, a strength born of long months of misery and of a single faint gleam of a possibility of escape, Simon suddenly shot forth his right arm, and the sentry dropped like a log to the deck.

Realizing that the supreme moment had come, Simon instantly darted toward the hatchway, but as he approached, he beheld man after man already coming up from below.

"Is that you, Peter?" he inquired eagerly, as he thought he recognized his friend before him.

"Yes, yes. What shall we do? What shall we do now?"

"Take a good grip on my hand and come on."

Taking his friend's hand within his own, Simon darted swiftly toward the rail, and together the two young prisoners leaped over it and fell into the water far below. As they rose to the surface, they were aware that others were following. Splash after splash occurred, until it seemed to them both that every prisoner on the Jersey must be aware of what was going on and was joining in the one last attempt to regain liberty and life.

Both Peter and Simon were expert swimmers, and the excitement for the moment provided an unnatural strength, which they were quick to use. Keeping closely together, they struck out in the darkness, not knowing in which direction safety was to be found, and controlled solely by the one mad desire to leave the prison-ship behind them.

They had taken but a few strokes, however, when an uproar on the Jersey behind them disclosed the fact that the escape had been discovered. Shout after shout was heard, the voice of Billy the Ram rising loud above the din, gun after gun was discharged, and the sound of the splashes in the water abruptly ceased. Simon was dimly aware that boats were being sent forth from the Jersey, and might overtake them at any moment. So,

bravely and with all his strength, he swam on, keeping all the time close to his friend, and occasionally speaking in a low voice to cheer him and make him aware that he was not alone.

Lights now flared up from the deck behind them, but Simon was rejoiced when he perceived that already he and Peter were beyond the limits where their beams fell. Boats, however, were passing and repassing, and the quick stops they frequently made, and the words of the angry oarsmen, only too plainly indicated that some, perhaps all of the prisoners, were being retaken.

At such times Simon ceased swimming, and close beside his friend lay floating and drifting in the water, but the moment the peril passed, the efforts of the desperate swimmers were renewed.

All thoughts of direction were now abandoned. On and on swam the two young swimmers, and at length the shouts of the men behind them and the sounds of the oars alike ceased. Thus far they had escaped detection.

A new peril now appeared, and one which threatened even worse results than recapture, for Peter was becoming exhausted. The little



strength he had had served him during the moments of keenest excitement, but now the reaction had come, and Peter was unable to speak, much less to swim.

Almost despairing, Simon, partly supporting his helpless friend, continued his efforts, but he soon was aware that his own strength was not equal to the task. If he left Peter, there was a possibility that he himself might succeed in making his way to the shore. To remain seemed certain death for them both.

Without hesitating a moment, however, Simon continued to struggle. He would be true to his friend to the end, come what might. But resolution, though it may stimulate, cannot supply strength, and the young swimmer was about to give up in despair, when he felt a floating log strike him on the shoulder.

Quick to seize the unexpected aid, he succeeded in lifting his friend across it, and then, holding fast both to Peter and the log, he resolved to let the tide carry him whither it would. At times he tried to increase the motion of the log, and then again would lie still and the incoming tide did all the work.

Strange lights began to appear before his eyes. Sometimes they seemed to be upon the shore and then in the sky, and then strangely

mingled. At last he was dimly aware that the log had struck against something, he knew not what, and he also thought he could hear the voices of men not far away.

With one supreme effort he lifted up his voice and called for aid, and then the dancing lights and the sound of the ripples ceased, and silence and blackness were over all.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE RETURN

WHEN John Russell had peered into the face of one of the men who had been drawn from the water, he had had no feeling but that of pity for some unfortunate sailor, who perhaps had fallen overboard and been lost in the dark waters of the bay ; but as the light of the torch revealed more clearly the features of the rescued man he had thought he recognized those of Peter Van Mater. It had been a long time since Peter had disappeared from Old Monmouth, and his friends had long ago abandoned all hope of ever seeing him again. Not a word had ever been received from him, and his unexplained absence had by the most of the people been accounted for by the explanation, which was usually given for the loss of others, — “Tories or Pine-robbers.” Now, however, John thought he had recognized at least a semblance of the features of the long absent young patriot, and to Captain Hyler he said, —

“That’s either the ghost or the likeness of Peter Van Mater, captain.”

“What? Little Peter? Who’s the other man?”

“I don’t know.”

“Let’s have a look at him.”

The torch was then held close to the face of Simon, who was as unconscious as his friend by his side. Both men were still breathing, however, and though Peter’s companion was not recognized by any of the band, it was resolved to take both with them; and Captain Hyler was about to give the word for his men to take their places at the oars, when he was startled by the voice of some one coming upon the dock and hailing them.

Time was precious now, but undue haste might only bring upon them the suspicions of others, and so the hardy captain waited a moment to hear what the stranger, who apparently was alone, had to say.

“You’ll land the stuff the first thing in the morning,” said the stranger. “I did n’t know whether I’d get to the dock before you started or not, but Mr. Lord sent me down in a hurry to say that he’d changed his mind, and would be glad to let the Caroline get away to-morrow as her skipper wanted

to. It is n't every day that a cargo of rum gets into the harbor."

The man was breathing with difficulty, and plainly showed the effects of his exertions.

Captain Hyler instantly perceived that his party had been mistaken for another one, which he concluded had recently come ashore, and, it was only fair to infer from the man's haste, would soon appear again. A large yawl which was fast to the dock confirmed his impressions, but he was too wary to arouse the suspicions of the man, and so he said quietly, "That's all right. How much of the rum do you want?"

"Why, all of it," replied the man in surprise. "We'll take the whole forty hogsheads. You can land it all by ten o'clock, can't you?"

"That'll be a pretty fair sized task, my friend."

"Oh, no, it won't. Your sloop is right out here by the Battery, and if you need help we'll give it to you. I understand you have n't more than a half dozen men in your crew, and we'll do the fair thing by you. We want that cargo and no mistake, and we want the next one you bring, too, and the sooner the better. You can set sail by

to-morrow night, if we help you unload in the morning, can't you?"

"Very likely. Come down here with your men about four o'clock to-morrow morning, and we'll be ready for you."

"We'll do it, and be glad to. Now don't forget that we're to have it all."

"Not another man in New York shall have a drop of it. Good-night to you."

"Good-night," responded the man.

Nevertheless he did not depart, and stood curiously observing the men as they lifted the helpless Peter and his companion into the whaleboat, and immediately started toward the bay. Captain Hyler was more anxious than he cared to show. The man had spoken of the crew of the *Caroline* as consisting of but a half dozen men, and what he would think of the force which manned the whaleboat he did not dare consider. However, the whaleboat glided out into the darkness without interruption, and the sturdy captain began to breathe more freely, as the mantle of darkness once more covered them. The wind was from the northeast, and all signs betokened a coming storm. Indeed, already a drizzling rain was falling, but that favored the plan which Captain Hyler had suddenly formed.



He was seated in the stern of the whale-boat, holding the tiller in his hand, and John Russell was by his side to give such attention as was possible to the two rescued men who lay stretched upon the bottom of the boat.

"John," said the captain, "from what that fellow told us, I'm of the opinion there's a sloop anchored off the battery here with a cargo of rum; what's more, a part of the crew are ashore."

"Yes?" said John, perceiving what was going on in the leader's mind.

"Well, we didn't get our bird, but why shouldn't we take what providence sends us? We can get that sloop, as sure's you're born."

"Try it," responded John eagerly. "We'll have to be quick about it, though, or the other men will be back. That man had been running hard, which showed that the other fellows had started for the dock."

"We'll waste no time, be sure of that, lad."

Without permitting his men to stop rowing, Captain Hyler in a few words explained his project to his followers, and without a dissenting voice they agreed to the proposal.

Accordingly, the captain slightly changed the course of the whaleboat, sending it in a

little nearer the shore of the Battery Point, and keeping a careful lookout for the presence of the schooner. The men were moving swiftly, but with that silence which was a characteristic of Captain Hyler's followers. The water was becoming rougher, and the lapping of the waves also served to drown the noise the approaching men made. The lights of the city could be seen, but for a time the presence of a sloop was not discovered. John had concluded that the captain must be mistaken, and that no vessel was near them, and he was about to urge his friend to abandon the search and go on down the bay, when suddenly a small sloop loomed up before them, and they were directly alongside before they fairly perceived her presence.

Instantly the men backed water, and in whispers Captain Hyler gave his directions. Three of his followers at the given signal were to rush for the cabin and secure those who might be within, three others were to do the same with the hold, and the remaining men were to follow Captain Hyler himself and overpower any of those who might be on deck, though no one beside the watch was expected to be found there in such a dark and disagreeable night.

All things were ready now, and making the boat fast the men, one after another, scrambled on deck. At first no one could be seen. The thought of danger within the harbor, and under the protecting care of the guns of Battery Point, probably had not entered the minds of skipper or crew of the sloop.

"Now, men!" whispered Captain Hyler, and quickly and stealthily those who were assigned to the tasks began to move toward the cabin and the hold.

"You're back early, Ben," said some one, approaching.

It was the watch. Without replying Captain Hyler slipped forward, and before the astonished sailor was aware of what was happening he was thrown upon the deck, his cries were stifled, and he was a prisoner.

As no one else could be seen, Captain Hyler quickly rushed to the assistance of his men, and in a brief time both the hold and cabin were securely fastened, and any one who might be within was prevented from coming forth.

"Now, bring up Peter and his mate, and we'll set sail," said the captain.

While John and two of the band were lifting the helpless men on board, both of whom

were now conscious, though they were so weak that they were unable to speak, and doubtless neither was fully aware of what was being done for them, Captain Hyler swiftly cut the cables of the sloop, and then began to assist his men in hoisting the sails.

"Ahoy there!" called some one, apparently from the waters beneath.

"It's the crew coming back," said Captain Hyler in a low voice. "We won't stop to bother with them, though we've room enough for more prisoners."

The sails of the sloop quickly filled, and before the strong breeze the boat began to move swiftly down the bay. The hail from the darkness was given again and again, but no heed was paid to it. The thoughts of all were bent upon getting away from the bay, before the daring seizure of the sloop should be discovered.

Dark as was the night Captain Hyler felt slight fear, for he was familiar "with every foot of the way," as he declared. The wind held strong, and soon it was perceived that it was the captain's plan not to return to Sandy Hook, but that he was entering the Kills; and just as the gray of the dawn appeared the sloop anchored off Elizabeth Town Point.

“Now, then, men, bestir yourselves!” shouted the gruff-voiced captain. “We’ll get this stuff ashore before any one comes for it. We promised that chap in New York that we’d land the whole forty hogsheads by sunrise.”

It had already been discovered that only three men of the original crew of the *Caroline* were on board, and as they had been secured arrangements were also made to send them ashore, and place them in charge of the authorities there.

Other boats and men were pressed into service, and by nine o’clock the entire cargo of the sloop had been safely landed. Peter and Simon, long since informed of their rescue and safety, had also been sent ashore; and when the forty hogsheads of rum were given over to the officers of the militia stationed at Elizabeth Town, Captain Hyler turned to John Russell and said, —

“Now we’ll set her afire.”

“What!” exclaimed John, aghast at the suggestion. “What! Burn up the sloop after you’ve got her here all right?”

“That’s just what I’m going to do,” replied the captain drily.

“But I don’t understand,” persisted John.

“I see you don’t. You soon will, though. You don’t suppose I’m going to leave such a sloop as this is to be taken by the British again, do you? And taken she would be, for no power on earth could hold her. We brought her out in the night, but before noon every craft along the shore will know where she is, and we could n’t hold her. No, sir! We’ve got the rum, and what’s more, they’ll never have the sloop again either. It’s something of a trade, you see. They keep Lippencott *this time*, but they lose their rum and the sloop.”

No further protest was made, and soon the Caroline was a mass of flames. By this time a crowd had assembled on the Point, and the conflagration called forth cheer after cheer. The tall mast fell with a crash, the flames leaped from the hold, showers of sparks were driven to the shore, and soon the sloop had burned to the water’s edge, and lay a charred and blackened hull, to drift out with the tide.

At nightfall Captain Hyler and his men resumed their places in the whaleboat and passed down the bay to enter the Raritar again, where they made their headquarters. John Russell, however, had remained behind



at his own suggestion to look after the immediate wants of Peter Van Mater and his friend.

He found them both in bed in the home of a zealous patriot who had gladly taken them, though he knew not who they were nor what their story was. As John entered the house, the good wife drew him aside, as, with a tragic whisper, she said, —

“ You never saw men in such a state in all your born days. I’ve burned up their clothes, and I’m thinking we’ll have to have a bee of the neighbors before they can go out of the house, which won’t be for a long time to come, if I’m not mistaken. They’re so poor that their bones just fairly stick through their skin, and as for a bath — Pooh !” and the good woman made a gesture more expressive than her words.

John’s face betrayed his sympathy, as he inquired, “ But how came it to pass ? How is it they are in such a state ? ”

“ I reckon almost any one would have been in such a state, if he’d been shut up in the Jersey for more’n two years.”

“ On board the Jersey ! Shut up in that ‘ hell afloat ? ’ Oh, you don’t mean it ! The poor lad ! The poor lad ! Take me in to

see him at once, for I have news to give him."

And a moment later, John followed the good woman into the room where lay the two "skeletons," as he afterwards described them.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### CONCLUSION

WEAK as Peter Van Mater and his friend were, there was a different expression in their faces from that which had been seen there for many a day. The comfort of a good bed, the tender care of a devoted woman, and above all, the knowledge that they had left for good and all the loathsome hold of the prison-ship, were tonics of themselves; and as the two recent prisoners listened to the story John related, there was a response, which, though silent, was such as to move strongly John Russell himself.

Briefly he told them of their strange rescue, and then, as he described the successful attempt of the bold Captain Hyler to take the Caroline and her cargo, and that now only the smoking hulk of the sloop remained in the bay, Simon could not restrain his delight, and even Peter's eyes were glistening.

A moment later, however, the thought uppermost in the mind of Peter displayed

itself, and in a trembling voice he inquired, "Tell me, John, about the children. Are they well? Where are they now?"

"You mean your brothers and sisters?" replied John cheerily. "Oh, they are well and safe, every one of them. I doubt me whether you yourself will recognize them, they are so grown. Sarah Osburn has looked well to their wants, and since her father's house was burned she has dwelt in your own father's house. The neighbors have been good, though they are not to be especially commended for that, for no one could very well do differently, and I am glad to be able to say that you'll soon see every one of your family in proper condition."

"My father, too?" inquired Peter eagerly, his eyes wet with tears.

John Russell's face clouded. For a moment he hesitated, but then, aware that the truth must soon be known, whether he or some one else declared it, he said in a lower tone, "No, Peter, I can give you no good word as to your father. You and I are alike in one respect; we have each lost a father in this terrible war of the Revolution. We shall have good cause to sorrow, but the same cause will, after all, rouse us both. 'In-

stead of the fathers shall come up the sons,' you know, and if they are gone, it will be just so much the more a reason why we shall have to take the burdens they bore upon our own shoulders."

For a brief time Peter was silent, and then he said slowly, "Tell me about him, John. I can bear it. I am stronger than you think."

"There is not much to tell, Peter. No direct word was ever received. It was generally supposed that he was carried to the sugar-house in New York, and the reports came that he had died there of the fever. That was more than two years ago, and since then not a word has been heard except that Lippencott told some friends of his in Old Monmouth that the report was true, and that to his knowledge your father's body was carried away one morning, along with many others, in the ox cart that came daily for its burden. But 't was only his body, lad, 't was only his body. He himself was free then, you must remember, and he had only laid aside his worn-out and rusty shell as I lay aside a coat when it has served its day. Keep up your heart, lad, as best you can, for the sake of others, and soon I will come for you and your friend and carry you to my house, where I can

assure you not only of a welcome, — a regular old-fashioned Jersey welcome, — but I can also promise you that certain young people shall be there to greet you.”

And bidding both of the ex-prisoners a cordial farewell, John Russell departed for his home, where he knew there would be great anxiety until he should himself return and assure the inmates by his own personal presence that no ill had befallen him.

The second plan which General Washington had determined upon, in case Lippencott, the murderer of Captain Huddy, was not given up by the British authorities, was speedily put into execution. He directed General Hogan to select by lot from the prisoners at either of the posts in Maryland or Pennsylvania a British captain, and that, as a means of retaliation, the man should be executed. As General Hogan learned that he had no such officer in his keeping, he was then directed to take a captain from among those who had been made prisoners in battle. Under this second order, the British captains who had been surrendered at Yorktown, and were now held at Lancaster, were ordered to assemble and draw lots. There were thirteen of these men, and understanding as they did what the



purpose of the action was, one may easily conjecture what their feelings must have been. Upon one of the lots the word "unfortunate" had been written, and the one to draw that was to be the victim.

The slip was drawn by young Charles Asgill, a captain of the Guards, and of a noble English family. He was at this time but nineteen years of age, and when he drew the fatal slip, he calmly remarked, "I knew it would be so. It has ever been my portion to be the 'unfortunate.'"

The young captain was at once conducted to Philadelphia, and from there removed to Chatham, all the time accompanied by his true and faithful friend, Major Gordon. The execution was delayed, for what purpose perhaps the humane commander-in-chief of the American army himself best knew, and Major Gordon seized the opportunity to exert himself to the utmost in behalf of his young friend. He appealed to the French minister in Philadelphia to intercede with Washington; he wrote to the Count de Rochambeau and sent special messengers to many of the most influential Whigs, striving to interest them in the boy officer, and it is said that so strong were his appeals that even the immediate

family and friends of Captain Joshua Huddy himself joined in begging Washington to spare the life of the innocent young soldier.

All these efforts availed at least to postpone the fatal moment, and the relatives and friends of Captain Asgill roused themselves to renewed and greater efforts in his behalf.

When his mother, Lady Asgill, heard of the peril of her boy, as her husband at the time was very ill and her daughter had become insane when she had received the news, she applied to King George in person, to intercede for her son. So eloquent and impassioned was she that that stubborn monarch, who seemed incapable of listening to justice or right when it concerned the colonies, at last yielded, and it is said that he ordered that Lippencott should be given up. Not satisfied, and perhaps fearful that the order might not be obeyed in far-off America, Lady Asgill wrote a most pathetic appeal to the Count de Vergennes, who himself placed it before the King and Queen of France. These two powerful rulers were so stirred by the pathos of the appeal of the poor mother that they at once wrote to General Washington begging for mercy and the release of the innocent young officer.

So, for months the fate of young Asgill remained in the balance, until at last, through the importunity of the French count, the matter was settled by Congress, and he was ordered to be set at liberty.

Perhaps a copy of the letter which George Washington himself wrote the youthful captain at the time may not be without interest.

SIR: It affords me singular satisfaction to have it in my power to transmit to you the inclosed copy of an act of Congress of the 7th inst., by which you are relieved from the disagreeable circumstances in which you have been so long. Supposing that you would wish to go to New York as soon as possible I also inclose a passport for that purpose. Your letter of the 18th came regularly to my hand. I beg of you to believe that my not answering it sooner did not proceed from inattention to you or a want of feeling for your situation; but I daily expected a determination of your case, and I thought it better to await, than to feed you with hopes that might in the end prove fruitless. You will attribute my detention of the inclosed letters to the same cause. I cannot take leave of you, Sir, without assuring you that in whatever light my

agency in this unpleasant affair may be viewed, I was never influenced throughout the whole of it by sanguinary motives, but what I conceived to be a sense of duty which loudly called upon me to use measures, however disagreeable, to prevent a repetition of those enormities which have been the subject of discussion; and that this important end is likely to be answered without the effusion of the blood of an innocent person is not a greater relief to you than it is to me.

Sir, etc.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Immediately after his release young Captain Asgill returned to England, and a second letter from his mother to Count de Vergennes is said to have been most beautiful and touching in the eloquence of her gratitude. There were those who claimed to believe that Washington did not intend any of the time that the innocent young captain should be hanged, but merely kept him with the threat hanging over his head to prevent the repetition of such outrages as that of Lippencott and his friends. Be that as it may, it none the less serves to illustrate the terrible nature of the war, and the cruel necessities to which, at such a time, even the best of men may be driven.

The final treaty of peace was made in 1783, when Great Britain acknowledged the United States to be free and independent. Canada was named as the boundary on the north of the new nation, the Mississippi River on the west, and Florida, extending west to the Mississippi, on the south. Spain owned the territory west of the Mississippi, a vast and not very clearly defined region known as Louisiana, and Great Britain now transferred to her Florida also. So the United States had Great Britain for her neighbor on the north, and Spain on the south and west. The changes in these boundaries which afterwards occurred are no legitimate part of the present story, and so must be left for its readers to learn in other ways.

After the declaration of peace the most of the Tories, fearful that their part in the great struggle would neither be forgotten nor forgiven, speedily departed, many of them for New Brunswick to take up the grants of land there promised, some to the West Indies, and still others to make their homes across the sea in Old England.

Of Lippencott no word was ever received. He disappeared completely, and it was whispered that, fearful of the anger of Captain



Hylar and others, he changed his name, and was glad to be forgotten.

Of Governor William Franklin, the only son of Benjamin Franklin, the bitter Tory who was at the head of the Board of Associated Loyalists in New York, which was directly responsible for Captain Huddy's death, more was known. He sailed for England, and soon afterwards wrote his father a letter begging for a reconciliation.

On the sixteenth day of August, 1784, Doctor Franklin, after receiving the letter, wrote his son a missive of which the following was a part: —

“I am glad to find that you desire to revive the affectionate intercourse that formerly existed between us. It will be very agreeable to me; indeed nothing has ever hurt me so much, and affected me with such keen sensations, as to find myself deserted in my old age by my only son; and not only deserted, but to find him taking up arms against me in a cause wherein my good fame, fortune, and life were all at stake. You conceived, you say, that your duty to your king and regard for your country required this. I ought not to blame you for differing in sentiment with me in public affairs. We are all men, subject



to errors. Our opinions are not in our power, they are formed and governed much by circumstances that are often as inexplicable as they are irresistible. Your situation was such that few would have censured your remaining neuter, though there are natural duties which precede political ones and cannot be extinguished by them. This is a disagreeable subject; I drop it. And we will endeavor, as you propose, mutually to forget what has happened relating to it, as well as we can."

The doughty old doctor, however, was never able entirely to forget. At least we may judge so from a clause in his will dated June 23, 1789, nearly five years after he wrote the letter from which we have quoted.

In this will he thus remembers his son William, "late governor of the Jerseys: " —

"I give and devise all the lands I hold or have a right to in the Province of Nova Scotia to hold to him, his heirs and assigns forever. I also give to him all my books and papers which he has in his possession, and all debts standing against him in my account books, willing that no payment for, nor restitution of, the same be required of him by my executors. The part he acted against me in the late war, which is of public notoriety, will

account for my leaving him no more of the estate he endeavored to deprive me of."

The son William lived to be a man eighty-two years old, and died in 1813.

As for Captain Adam Hyler, he did not live to learn of the final issue of the war, as he died in (New) Brunswick before peace was formally declared; but for a long time his name was gratefully remembered, and the bold and successful — though humble — part he had in the war of the Revolution continued to be the theme of story and of song by many a fireside in New Jersey.

The immediate heroes of this tale, Peter Van Mater and his friend Simon, recovered from the effects of their terrible suffering, and lived for many years in Old Monmouth. In the home of Peter, Sarah Osburn continued to stay, for she was left alone in the world; but the part which there was hers it is not the province of this story to relate. It might, however, be whispered that it was as the mistress that Sarah presided, and if she did, we may be sure she did her part well, and that Peter was rejoiced to share his life with one who had done so much for him and his in their hours of sorrow and peril.

Among the frequent visitors in the Van

Mater household two names must not be forgotten. One of these was Tom Coward, Peter's boyhood friend, who too had suffered in the war, but unlike his friend had been restored to his family, whereas Peter had lost father and mother both. As Tom resided in New York, where he became a successful merchant, the visits were often returned, and the friendship formed in youth continued until old age came upon them both.

The other visitor was Garrett. Arriving no matter how unexpectedly his welcome was never wanting, and until that fatal winter morning, when the body of the poor demented man was found cold and lifeless upon Gallows Hill, of which he so frequently had sung, there was no other place so much like home to him as was the home of Peter Van Mater.

Our other "character" of this story must not be forgotten, for the Jersey was almost a character to those who had suffered upon it.

On the twenty-sixth of May, 1808, a belated but no less solemn funeral service was held for the eleven thousand wretched men who had perished on board of her. The old ship, itself old when the war broke out, at last crumbled and dropped away, and sank beneath the muddy waters over which she had rested

in the terrible days of the Revolution. As she herself has gone, so it is neither wise, nor is it the part of a Christian nation to dwell upon the sufferings and miseries of which she was the cause. Not that the part the heroes took should ever be ignored, but the bitterness of the struggle belongs alone to the days that have been. To-day the nations which fought are friends again, and the friendship ought never to be broken.

What remains and is eternal is the life for which they struggled. The principles and the nation are still ours. They are worthy of our best efforts. The men who gave their lives, their heroism and fidelity, their devotion and patriotism — these are the eternal things, and are ours as much as ever they were our fathers'.



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